Cultural Conservatism

Theory and practice

William S. Lind
William H. Marshner
Editors

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Cultural Conservatism: Theory and Practice
William S. Lind and William H. Marshner, editors

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Introduction

By William S. Lind

IN 1987, the new school of political thought known as cultural conservatism was introduced by a short book, *Cultural Conservatism: Toward a New National Agenda*.[1] That volume put forward what has become the standard definition of this philosophy:

> Cultural conservatism is the belief that there is a necessary, unbreakable, and causal relationship between traditional Western, Judeo-Christian values, definitions of right and wrong, ways of thinking and ways of living—the parameters of Western culture — and the secular success of Western societies: their prosperity, their liberties, and the opportunities they offer their citizens to lead fulfilling, rewarding lives. If the former are abandoned, the latter will be lost.[2]

The essence of cultural conservatism can be reduced further, to a single phrase: traditional values are functional values. If we want a society where things work—where students learn in schools, where products are competitive, where our homes and our persons are safe from crime, etc. —we must, as a society, follow traditional Western values. The reason we find these United States slipping inexorably toward the status and condition of a Third World country is that, for about the past 70 years (and with marked acceleration in the last 25), we have been moving away from those values. Traditional values work, in terms of the kind of nation they build; counter-culture values, whether those of the anti-Western cultural radical we find on so many university faculties or the self-centered, money and status-seeking (and frequently Republican) "yuppie," do not.

Cultural Conservatism: Toward a New National Agenda briefly expounded on this concept, then applied it to ten policy areas. Some were standard: the family, education, economics, welfare, conservation and environment, and crime and punishment. Others, reflecting cultural conservatives' belief in re-defining the questions as well as the answers, were somewhat novel: institutional design (the difference between the bureaucratic and the corporative institutional models), religious and moral institutions, military reform, and community preservation and creation.

In a number of these policy areas, cultural conservatism broke from the usual conservative line. The book discussed why cultural conservatives are environmentalists ("An attitude of 'trash it up and move on' is not consistent with culturally conservative beliefs about stewardship, personal responsibility and self-discipline"); why they accept responsibility toward the poor and disadvantaged ("We accept it because it is one of the West's longest-standing traditions; help for the poor, the sick, the crippled, the widowed and the orphaned is mandated in the Old Testament, our culture's oldest code"); and why they have grave doubts about the wisdom of giving a blank check to the Pentagon ("Military bureaucracies behave no differently from civilian bureaucracies").

These stands caused a good deal of controversy within the conservative camp. Even more controversial was cultural conservatism's acceptance of the legitimacy of some government action to help solve these and other problems. While carefully noting the proper limits on government, especially the Federal government, *Cultural Conservatism* nonetheless broke decisively from the libertarian notion that all government is bad government. It explicitly called on conservatives to *govern*, which of course requires action by government. It also noted, again in contrast to libertarian views, that the economic free market does not solve all problems. From the cultural conservative standpoint, economics is part of a society's "superstructure;" the bedrock is the culture, and if the culture is not sound,

neither a free market nor any other economic system will work well.

On the other side of the conservative spectrum, cultural conservatism also parted company from elements of the religious right. The book stated clearly that no religious belief is necessary to qualify a person as a cultural conservative. "Such an individual (a non-believer) can be as firm a cultural conservative as someone who derives his political philosophy from Judaism or Christianity, provided that he shares the basic insight that traditional values are functional values. The case for cultural conservatism can be made in wholly secular terms." Many members of the religious right understood that their values are the same as those espoused by cultural conservatives and that they are therefore in the same political camp. Those few who really do seek a theocracy in the United States realized cultural conservatism does not share that aim. In that realization, they are correct.

In defining cultural conservatism, illustrating its practical application in a variety of policy areas and delineating it from other schools of conservative thought, *Cultural Conservatism: Toward a New National Agenda* launched this new political philosophy.

But a political philosophy requires more than launching. Its theory must be developed and explained, and its application must be broadened. Those requirements led to this volume, *Cultural Conservatism: Theory and Practice.*

The first section of the book deals with cultural conservatism as a political theory. It opens with a chapter by Paul Weyrich, "Cultural Conservatism and the Conservative Movement," that will probably cause some stir. It sets cultural conservatism within the context of the larger conservative movement, and in so doing offers a serious critique of that movement. As one of the principal founders of both the new right and the religious right and the first president of the Heritage Foundation, Weyrich is one of conservatism's foremost insiders. He is in a position to know the movement's errors and failures, and here he

sets them out in a rigorous analysis. Then, he demonstrates how cultural conservatism addresses and rights them.

Weyrich's chapter raises a question: Can we even speak of a conservative "movement" in the year 1991? Clearly, there once was such a thing, as the elections of 1978 and 1980 showed. But does it still live, or are the noises we hear merely the rattling of its ghost? In the provinces, it is hard to find its troops, the army of voters and volunteers without which any idea is hard pressed to claim movement status. Its last field force, the Pat Robertson army, seems to have dissolved under the impact of the televangelist scandals. There is still the machinery of the Republican Party, but it responds mainly to the country-club oligarchy of the national Republican leadership, which has few guiding ideas beyond obtaining office.

Washington still has a plethora of people who claim to be conservative "leaders." But just as Louis XIV neutered the French nobility by drawing them to Versailles, many of these once-upon-a-time movement conservatives now flitter about the lights of the White House, more concerned with how their statements and actions will be received there than by whether they have any identifiable conservative content. A movement must be driven by ideas, hard-hitting, often controversial ideas that grip a nation's central problems and its people. A conservative "leadership" that seeks the smiles of the Bush administration, which in domestic policy is itself little more than a caretaker government, must shy away from ideas as threats to its favor at court.

So is there still a conservative movement? Sadly, no. There is a crying need for such a movement; there are troops ready to be recruited; and there are, as this volume illustrates, some powerful and innovative ideas around which a movement could be formed. But as we write, in the winter of 1991, the conservative movement should be spoken of in the past tense, with some local exceptions such as Colorado and Oregon, where grass roots conservatives are active.

Chapter Two, "Variety and Unity in Culture," is from America's most eminent cultural conservative, Russell Kirk. Dr. Kirk has been advocating cultural conservatism for a good four decades, although he left it to others to give it a name. Here, he writes on a point where cultural conservatives have been subject to some criticism: the relationship between popular culture and high culture.

Cultural Conservatism: Toward a New National Agenda raised objections in some quarters that it overlooked or even slighted the importance of high culture. There was some truth in this criticism. Fearful that cultural conservatism would be seen as pertaining only to a "cultured" elite, it bent over backwards to stress that cultural conservatism's basis is popular culture.

Yet as Dr. Kirk reminds us here, "intelligent cultural conservatives make themselves defenders of something more than the common culture which the American population has inherited. For they try to uphold, as well, that understanding of culture which champions the cultivation of mind and conscience; what is often called 'high culture.' If we may call popular culture democratic, let us call this higher culture aristocratic: both aspects of culture are necessary to an enduring civilization."

One venue where the relationship between high and popular culture and the dependence of the latter on the former is evident is in America's "metropolitan corridor," the towns and small cities that grew up in the 19th and early 20th centuries along major railway lines.[3] At one time, these places were culturally developed, as much of their surviving architecture attests. Their local aristocracy, drawn largely from among professionals and merchants, looked for their culture to the aristocracy of the major cities to which the railways tied them. They transmitted a portion of that aristocracy's culture to the general population of their towns. Life in a classic metropolitan corridor town such as, say, Oakland, Maryland, reflected some of the high as well as the popular culture of cities such as Washington and Baltimore.

Today, the metropolitan corridor has become culturally squalid. The reason is a change in the transmission of culture, and with it the nature of the culture transmitted. The local aristocracy no longer has much if any cultural role. Instead, the means of transmission of culture is the television. The culture transmitted by television is virtually all popular culture, and generally the worst aspects of that. High culture no longer influences the metropolitan corridor, and without that influence, squalor triumphs.

Most of America's cultural decay comes from a gradual wearing away or forgetting of traditional culture. But there is also an active, ideological assault on traditional culture, an assault driven by the cultural radicals. The third chapter, "The Radical View of the World," by Michael Levin, dissects cultural radicalism and gets at its essence.

The cultural radicals Levin discusses are those we readily identify, the "racism, sexism and homophobia" crowd so vocal on college campuses. But is there perhaps also a culturally radical element in the conservative camp? I refer to the libertarians.

Of course, some libertarians are culturally conservative. They see that a free market depends on a framework of values and that traditional Western values are particularly helpful in building a framework supportive of free enterprise. Most such libertarians are libertarians primarily in reference to economics, and since cultural conservatives also believe in economic freedom, the two can coexist and overlap quite comfortably.

However, there are libertarians who go much further. An extreme strain of libertarian thought shows up in books such as Robert Heinlein's *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*, a work highly popular in libertarian circles. The lunar society Heinlein describes is anything but culturally conservative; it is culturally brutal, arid and vicious. From the perspective of traditional values, it is culturally radical, as much so as would be the deconstructionist, feminist, socialist society envisioned by the campus cultural radicals.

Levin writes, "It is evident that, for the radical, there is only one question to ask about any facet of society: 'To whom does it give power, and over whom?'" Is this not also the central issue for radical libertarians? Levin notes further that "if one seeks the assumption buried beneath even this obsession, I would suggest that it is monism about human motives." Surely one can say the same about libertarian extremists. While left-wing cultural radicals argue that power is the sole human motive, extreme libertarians argue that the only motive is greed. Both deny the reality of anything higher, such as altruism, arguing that such a morally inspired motive must be either deceptive or an irrational prejudice that distorts logical thought.

If extreme, ideological libertarianism is examined through the lens developed by Michael Levin, it may be seen as the cultural radicalism it really is. It is perhaps time for conservatives to realize that such libertarianism has much more in common with the cultural radicalism of the left than with conservatism, and that including such libertarians in the conservative camp is philosophically untenable.

"Why the West?", by Bill Bennett, the fourth chapter, says something that too often goes unsaid in today's America. Why the West? Bennett answers, because it is ours, because it is good, and because it is under attack.

It is appropriate at this point for the reader to shout, Hooray! Finally, somebody has said it, the root answer to the cultural radicals: the West is ours, the West is good—morally as well as functionally good, with the two inextricably interlinked—and it is under attack by, of course, the cultural radicals.

Bennett notes that the radicals quickly denounce any such forthright defense of the West as "variously sexist, elitist, imperialist, bourgeois, ethnocentric, racist, selfish, and solipsistic." It is time we, the cultural conservatives, stopped quailing before this stream of adjectives. Rather, in response, let us analyze them and toss them back.

A favorite is the charge, "sexist." The word sounds, intentionally no doubt, like "racist." But in fact, as charges of moral deficiency, they are entirely different.

Racism can be a serious moral charge. For example, the Jim Crow laws were racist, and they were morally wrong. They were wrong because they treated a group of people, black people, in a common negative fashion. Racism of this sort became a legitimate moral issue because it gave black people in America a common and very negative experience. It was an experience shared virtually across the spectrum by blacks.

The same is not true of women. If one looks at, for example, a woman attorney in Manhattan, a housewife in Dubuque and a streetwalker in San Francisco, one sees that little binds them in a common experience. The woman attorney has more in common with male attorneys in Manhattan than with the housewife in Iowa; the housewife has more in common with her husband than with the streetwalker in San Francisco; and the streetwalker has more in common with her pimp than with either of the other women. Unlike the situation with blacks and racism, little common social experience comes out of being a woman; other social factors have much stronger effects.

What this means is that while the charge of racism can have significant moral meaning (it is now used so freely that the moral meaning is fast leaving it, but that is another matter), that of "sexism" does not. The implied parallel does not exist. Blacks have been looked upon in the past as blacks and little else; women have been and are seen primarily as something more specific — fellow professional, wife and mother, prostitute, whatever — than "women," and the more specific characteristics have been more defining by far than the common characteristic.

As Bennett says, quoting George Orwell, at times it is necessary to restate the obvious. For the most part, the "ism" charges of the radicals are bunk. They amount to Marx for kiddies, for the remnants of the New Left of the

1960s. At least the leftists of the 1930s were serious people; those we find on our campuses today are not.

Chapters Five and Six are symbiotic, in that Chapter Five lays down a subject that Chapter Six takes up. Chapter Five, "Science and Western Civilization," begins by reminding us of one of the reasons why Western culture is good. It is the culture from which, and because of which, modern science developed. Again, we need to restate the obvious: modern medicine did not come from China, the steam engine was not invented by the Maya, and the inventor of the telephone was not a Zulu. Chapter Five helps us understand what it is about the West that led it to originate modern science.

Then, in Chapter Six, "Empiricism, Metaphysics, and the Recovery of the Whole,"[4] Jeffrey Hart undertakes a dazzling exposition of modernity itself; identifies its limits; and folds it back upon itself in a way that gives meaning to the term "post modern." Hart's work here is not so much analytical as — something much rarer — synthetical. He takes modernity apart only to put it together again in a way that enables us to see it as a whole. The ability to do that is itself post modern; we cannot clearly see that of which we are a part. And modernity, if not over, is ending. Its success no longer succeeds. Through its essence, empiricism, it continues to develop dazzling technology, but technology itself is bumping up against limits of diminishing returns and harmful side-effects.

More fundamentally, as we recline among the fruits of modernity — modern medicine, air conditioning, instant communication and the like — we find ourselves and our lives empty. We live in the richest, freest society in history, but we are anything but placid and content. We know something is missing, but we know not what.

Ideology is an attempt to provide that "something," but it fails; it is soma, or perhaps a lobotomy, that deadens but does not answer. We consume frantically, drugs, pornography, perversion, anything that promises power enough to divert us from the void at the center of things. But we

find that such diversions end up consuming us, making the void all the more personal and intense.

This chapter—possibly the most brilliant in the book—helps us see what the void is and where it came from. Most important, it offers us a way through and beyond it, a path that is itself fully modern but that may lead beyond modernity.

The title of Chapter Seven, "The Ten Commandments: An Engineering Evaluation," is intriguing. What can engineering have to do with the Ten Commandments? As Raphael Kazmann shows, the answer is, "a great deal." Cultural conservatism is not merely the argument that traditional Western values are good. It argues rather that they are good because of what they do, what functions they perform. Kazmann follows this line of reasoning in looking at the West's oldest code, the Ten Commandments: "What exactly are they designed to do? How well do they achieve the objective? What are they good for, and when?"

This chapter gets at the heart of our time's central error, relativism. Relativism is the most deadly enemy of traditional Western values, because it is the enemy of all values. If everything is relative, why bother about values at all? Not even the relativists' own values—toleration, diversity, sensitivity and the like—can withstand relativism itself.

If it's all relative, why should I prefer a Quaker to a Nazi? The one is a pacifist and the other a killer, but if life and death are all relative, who is to say one is better than the other? If that seems unreal, remember, it is an argument one hears frequently about aborted babies. Aren't they better off dead than if they were born to some teenage single mother in the ghetto? It's all relative, even life and death.

But, of course, it isn't. Even among the relativists, human nature rebels at a vacuum of values. Hence we see the campus cultural radicals demanding "diversity" as a supreme value (at least diversity toward the left; the *Dartmouth Review* need not apply). We refute total relativism, relativism that applies to survival itself, like Dr.

Johnson refuted Berkeley; we hand the relativist a knife, and when he refuses to kill himself, we say, "I refute him thus."

Once we accept the merit of life, other values follow. Kazmann draws those values out, one by one, proceeding from the choice of life. And we see, with a new clarity, how by observation and logic we arrive at—the Ten Commandments.

With Chapter Eight, we begin to look at cultural conservatism from a different standpoint: practical application. Lawrence Harrison applies it to economics. Our economic problems are serious; our living standard is falling rapidly, as anyone who tries to give a family a middle class standard of living on one income knows (something quite commonly done just thirty years ago). The politicians promise various nostrums—tax cuts will make us save (they didn't), planned industrial policy will make us competitive (it hasn't in Eastern Europe), a cheap dollar will correct the trade deficit (it won't)—but there is something more fundamental at work here.

That something is culture. Harrison has looked at various cultures, and he finds that some work better than others. Traditional North American culture did work, but we are losing that culture, and with the loss the economy that depended upon the culture is breaking down. Falling living standards are rooted in cultural decline.

We need a new economics, one that includes the economic function of culture. Amitai Etzioni is struggling toward it in his concept of socioeconomics.[5] Cultural conservatives might call it "cultural economics." Developing cultural economics is one of the challenges facing cultural conservatives. This chapter makes a good start.

Most cultural conservatives agree that just as culture has vital economic functions, so religion has vital cultural functions. Without the support of religion, virtue finds rough going. Our Founding Fathers knew and often said that no republic, deprived of virtue, can endure. Our

plethora of lawyers tells us what happens to a free market economy when virtue is in short supply.

Agreed, then, religion is a force for good; how do we liberate it from the clutches of our judiciary, which has recently undermined the Constitutional guarantee of free exercise of religious belief? Chapter Nine, "Protecting our Heritage of Religious Liberty," suggests some ways.

Chapter Ten, "Conservatives and Civil Rights," by Robert L. Woodson, takes on a subject conservatives often neglect. As Woodson says, "the conservative approach (or lack thereof) to civil rights matters has generally been limited to an indictment of Great Society programs with few, if any specifics regarding an alternative approach.. Secondly, conservatives have consistently been mute on issues of race or racism."

Part of the reason conservatives have been reticent about civil rights is that there appeared to be only two views to choose between. The first was the racist viewpoint, and the second was the culturally radical view embodied in the "rainbow coalition" and its associated liberationism. Not surprisingly, with those seeming choices, conservatives often preferred to remain silent.

One of the goals of cultural conservatism is to propound a "third path" between the usual left and right alternatives, and that is exactly what Woodson puts forward here. Writing about his National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, he states:

> We do not want to know how many black female-headed households exist with children in prison, in jails, or on drugs. We want to know how a woman raises five children by herself, in public housing and on welfare, but gets off welfare in three years and manages to send all five children to college. In other words, we examine the strengths of poor people, document their successes, and then we try to bring them together to determine what are some of the common principles—and what are some of the common barriers they face —that can be "exploited" to provide opportunity.

Woodson argues that conservatives can work with blacks to replace welfare with entrepreneurship, black entrepreneurship, with conservatives helping to clear the way through obstacles such as demands for formal credentials. Out of this economic partnership can arise a new political partnership between conservatives and blacks, a new strategic alliance.

Building new strategic alliances is one of cultural conservatism's major objectives. Just as the present black coalition is stuck in a permanent minority position, able to do little more than serve as a nuisance within the Democratic party, so conservatives are also stuck, playing an analogous role within the Republican party. Looking to each other as potential allies is a revolutionary notion, but politically it makes sense. Woodson does an invaluable service by telling conservatives how they can lay the base for such a dramatic realignment.

In Chapter Eleven, "A Jewish Perspective on the Common Culture," Rabbi Aryeh Spero suggests that Judaism offers substantial support for a culturally conservative point of view. He examines three current issues from a Judaic perspective, abortion, welfare, and day care, and also takes a look at the broader question of philosophical relativism. He writes, "The Bible, however, construes any values as absolute—not relative. 'Thou shalt not' is one of the most recurring phrases in the Bible. The welfare state's most frequent axiom is: 'I have a right to ... I am entitled to.'"

Chapter Twelve, "Tax Reform for Family Survival," introduces a key element into the cultural conservative agenda: direct government support for the family, through changes in the tax code. Some conservatives may at first view this as heretical, in that it involves government action. But as Michael Schwartz points out, we did it as recently as the post-war "baby boom" era. In 1948, the personal exemption was $600 per dependent, which meant that most workers supporting a family paid *no*

Federal income tax. The money that would have gone into taxes instead went into supporting the family.

In contrast, the current personal exemption is worth only about one-third as much, and leaves the average family with a sizeable income tax liability. Schwartz calls for restoring its original value, which would mean raising it to $6000. He goes on to propose a wide variety of similar measures through which government would offer America's most endangered species, the family, concrete support.

Schwartz's proposals offer alternatives to those the liberals have advanced, such as government-provided day care for working mothers, which under the cover of "pro-family" rhetoric will work to undermine the traditional family still further. Equally important, they lay down a "put up or shut up" challenge to conservatives who have, on the whole, been much better at talking about supporting the traditional family than actually doing anything to help it. The sincerity of conservative politicians' pro-family views should, in the future, be measured by the degree to which they are working to enact the agenda Schwartz outlines here.

Chapter Thirteen, by William C. Myers, offers a comprehensive discussion of one of the most promising new conservative ideas, that of giving parents the right to choose what schools their children attend. This is "empowerment" at its best. It helps children by improving the quality of their schools and allowing them to match their schooling to their individual needs and interests. It helps parents by drawing them into the education of their children, uniting what is going on in the school with what should be going on in the home. It can help teachers and school administrators by freeing them from the dead hand of the education bureaucracy and allowing them to do their best for their students.

But there, of course, is the rub: it frees those educators who really want to educate, but it is a threat to those who are content merely to be bureaucrats. Sadly, at present, the

latter seem to be dominant, especially in the teachers' unions. Much of the education establishment is therefore violently opposed to choice in education, and is fighting the idea fiercely wherever it rears its head.

But this is one conservatives can win. Here, we are the freedom fighters, the resistance, the people, while they are the corrupt oligarchs, the elite demanding high pay for poor performance, the equivalent of the Communist apparatchiks in the Soviet Union. Choice in education benefits everyone except the bureaucrats who want what a bureaucracy always wants, a monopoly, so they can relax in well-funded comfort while telling the public to go to hell. We can mobilize the public against them, in every school district, city, and state. We can unite left and right, middle class and poor, white and black, to fight for something that benefits us all. Choice in education is almost a dream issue, because it represents constructive polarization at its best: the "us" can be a vast majority, fighting a small, unproductive, privileged elite. In terms of issues that can build a cultural conservative, grass-roots movement, this is one of the best.

Finally, in "Opportunity for Higher Education: A New Approach," Louisiana oil magnate Patrick F. Taylor offers a powerful and moving account of cultural conservatism in action. Taylor personally pitted traditional values against the cultural breakdown often found among the urban poor—and won! Facing an auditorium of poor black school children, he offered a free college education to any and all of them who maintained a "B" average, completed high school and stayed away from drugs and crime. The result? Taylor writes, "of the 83 ninth grade students in the program, 25 are now enrolled in freshman honors classes at their high school. The majority have brought their grades up to a 'B' average. Again, these were kids who were not expected to enter high school."

Taylor has discovered that if traditional values can be tied to meaningful rewards, youths from a background of poverty will respond. This suggests a different perspective

on the underclass, a possibility that traditional culture has survived there to a greater extent than many observers have recognized. It normally does not manifest itself because it seems irrelevant to those trapped in an underclass existence. They know the drug dealer or the pimp, who are "successful" because they have money, do not follow traditional values. But the values are still there, latent. When they can be tied to a visible reward like a chance to go to college, they can still manifest themselves.

Taylor went on to propose that Louisiana institutionalize his discovery in its policy toward higher education. Like other states, Louisiana had open admissions at its state colleges and universities, but the expense of attending even state schools was more than many qualified Louisianans could afford. Taylor proposed the existing policy be reversed: admission would require meeting certain criteria—completion of an academic core curriculum in high school, a high school grade average of C+, and a score of at least 18 on the American College Tests—but all tuition and fees would be waved for anyone meeting the criteria who could not afford to pay their own way.

The concept is brilliant, because it puts into concrete form one of our culture's more important principles, the idea that merit and ability should be rewarded regardless of birth or background. The bright and able young man or woman from a poor background would have the same opportunity they would get had they been born into a middle or upper class family, at least in terms of opportunity for education and the advancement it brings. It would be a potentially significant ladder for upward mobility, and in that sense it ties in closely with what Bob Woodson recommends in his chapter.

In 1989, the Louisiana legislature adopted Taylor's proposal, and five additional states have adopted it since or are considering it currently. This is good news for opportunity in education. But it does contain one danger. There may be a temptation in some states to set the university entrance requirements so low that they cease to be meaningful, resulting not in a new incentive to study and learn,

but simply another entitlement program. Entitlement programs are part of the problem of poverty, not part of the solution. The genius of the Taylor Plan is that it does not offer an entitlement, but rather an earned reward. The process of earning the reward is itself a major element in the breakout from the culture of poverty. If that is stripped out, the essence of the concept will be gone, and all that will be left is one more welfare handout.

Cultural Conservatism: Theory and Practice is a logical successor to the first work on the subject, *Cultural Conservatism: Toward a New National Agenda*. It broadens the theory and it expands the practices outlined in the first book. It draws on some of the best minds in the conservative movement, in men such as Russell Kirk, Jeffrey Hart, and Bill Bennett. Their very presence in this volume shows the depth and spread of the cultural conservative philosophy itself.

NOTES

1. William S. Lind and William H. Marshner, *Cultural Conservatism: Toward a New National Agenda* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987). This book may be ordered from the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, 717 Second Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002 for $8.95.

2. William S. Lind, "What is Cultural Conservatism?", *Essays On Our Times*, Vol. II, No. 1, March 1986, page 3.

3. See John R. Stilgoe, *Metropolitan Corridor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

4. A version of this chapter was published in *Essays On Our Times*, Vol. IV, No.1, April 1988.

5. Amitai Etzioni, *The Moral Dimension: Toward a New Economics* (New York: The Free Press, 1988).

Cultural conservatism and the conservative movement

BY PAUL M. WEYRICH

Cultural conservatism is a new school of conservative thought. William S. Lind, one of the editors of this volume, likes to say that no one has had a new idea since the eighteenth century except Nietzsche, and he was mad. That is true in a broad sense, and none of the themes gathered under the umbrella of cultural conservatism is totally new. On the contrary, we are happy to acknowledge debts to a number of conservative thinkers from Edmund Burke through Russell Kirk.

Nevertheless, cultural conservatism represents a break with much current conservative orthodoxy. It breaks from it in favoring conservation of the environment; in accepting the moral obligation to the less fortunate that welfare represents; in seeing labor, not capital, as the basis for a free market economy; and in favoring military reform, not just higher defense budgets. Nor are cultural conservatives fusionists, blending elements of left and right. Our views on such subjects as welfare and military reform differ from current liberal as well as conservative thinking. Cultural conservatism represents a third way, something new and different here and now, if not unique under the sun.

The difference begins with the initial premise of cultural conservatism, that traditional values are functional values. This marks a different starting point for conserva-

tives. Most American conservative thought begins not with culture but with economics: if a nation has a free market economy, all will be well. Cultural conservatives believe in a free market economy, but they do not believe society is economically determined. On the contrary, unless a society's culture is sound — in our case, unless it adheres to traditional Western values—a free market will not work. Instead of generating balanced growth and increasing productivity, it will yield only conspicuous consumption, greed, and ostentation. Recent scandals on Wall Street, in the Chicago futures market and in Pentagon procurement illustrate all too well where a free market minus traditional values leads.

In its emphasis on the function of traditional values—on the role they play in creating a society that is free and prosperous—cultural conservatism also differs from much other social issues conservatism, which argues largely in religious terms. As the first book on cultural conservatism, *Cultural Conservatism: Toward a New National Agenda*, put it, "The case for cultural conservatism can be made in wholly secular terms."

Traditional values reflect what mankind has learned about itself over thousands of years in the great laboratory of human experience. Because human nature does not change, such lessons retain their validity today and will in the future. Far from representing "repression," the restraints upon conduct built into traditional culture help people live full, rich lives. Breaking those restraints yields not "liberation" but tragedy, as the Greeks understood and as we have relearned, at bitter cost, in the twentieth century. The price of the "liberation" this country has undergone, beginning in the 1920s and accelerating in the 1960s, has been unparalleled levels of alienation and anomie.

Cultural conservatism thus breaks from most other current American conservatism. But there is more to its differentness than its starting premise and its policy prescriptions. Cultural conservatism represents an effort to come to grips with six major failures of the conservative movement.

The first is the failure of the New Right to develop a meaningful agenda. I was a founder of the New Right, and when I criticize it, I offer some self-criticism. We generated, for a time, some real political clout; we showed that in the 1980 elections. But we did not know what to do with it. At least in the public perception, we had only two issues: school prayer and abortion. Both, to me, are important issues, abortion one of the most important. But two issues cannot turn a country around. If the New Right's whole agenda had been put into effect, not much would have changed. The general cultural decline of the nation, the movement away from traditional values, would have continued largely unaffected. In terms of developing an agenda broad enough and deep enough to reverse cultural decline, we failed.

The second failure—an ongoing one—is the failure of the Religious Right to reach out beyond its natural base. By insisting on religious beliefs as a pre-condition of membership, the Religious Right has been exclusive rather then inclusive. As military theorist Col. John Boyd points out, the essence of strategy is building connections, and the essence of strategic failure is isolation. The Religious Right has been self-isolating, and in this it has failed strategically.

The Religious Right is now stuck on a plateau of political strength, a plateau of minority status, and it seems unable to move beyond it. It risks becoming for the Republican Party what the blacks are to the Democratic Party: an element necessary for victory, but one to be placated with the fewest possible concessions at election time and otherwise ignored.

Nor does the Religious Right's failure stop with this. Again, I feel a right to be critical, because I am a founder of the Religious Right and I share the responsibility for its errors. By establishing a religious litmus test for membership, we have given many Americans, including many who share our values, the suspicion that we have a hidden agenda. Specifically, many Americans fear the Religious Right wants to establish a theocracy, in which evangelical

Protestant Christian beliefs would be supported by the power of the state. They fear we want something like a Massachusetts Bay Colony or a Christian version of Khomenei's Iran.

To anyone like myself who knows the Religious Right, this fear is ridiculous. There is a tiny faction of Christian Reconstructionists who do seek a theocracy, but they are far out on the fringe. A consensus among the Religious Right on any kind of theocratic government is inconceivable, for the simple reason that the religious beliefs within it are too various. For example, I am a Catholic. If this country ever became the evangelical Protestant theocracy that is supposedly our hidden agenda, I would be on the first boat out. The only consensus the Religious Right can ever come to on state policy toward religion is the historic consensus embodied in our Constitution: separation of church and state, with the state respectful toward all religious beliefs but itself adhering to or enforcing none.

Because those of us who are in the Religious Right know the theocracy charge is absurd, we have not taken it seriously. Seeing ourselves on the defensive, trying to protect our faith, families and communities from relentless secular, culturally radical assault, we have been unable to see how others could believe we constitute a threat. Unfortunately, others *do* see us as threatening. Culturally radical opponents, such as People for the American Way and Planned Parenthood, have cleverly fanned these fears, and they are real. As long as there is a religious litmus test they will remain real. This is a critical weakness of the Religious Right, and it represents a failure of the conservative movement.

The third conservative failure is the failure to govern. Here, the failure must be laid largely at the door of the economic conservatives and the libertarians. Opposition to big government, especially big federal government as manifested in the "Great Society" and similar liberal expansions of federal power, is almost universal among conservatives. It is a view cultural conservatives share. But

many libertarians and economic conservatives go further, to the point where they deny government its rightful role in society.

In practical terms, this has led the conservative movement to be "Dr. No." We can point out plenty of things we are against. But what are we for? We want political power, but what do we intend to do with it? What is our program? To a large extent, we have had no answer. Hobbled by libertarian and economic conservative opposition to government per se, we have been unable to tell people what we want government to do. When in power, as under the Reagan administration, we have been unable to govern, to put forward a positive conservative program. Apart from the Secretary of Education, Bill Bennett, the Reagan administration had no agenda, at least after its early tax cuts and defense budget increases were put into place. It reigned, but it did not govern.

The American people do not share the libertarian view that the free market should handle all problems while government "withers away." They know the free market will not fix the potholes in their streets, keep drugs out of their schools, build the roads and rail transit lines they need to get to work or keep muggers out of their neighborhood. Americans expect government to do these things, and if conservatives will not do them, they will elect someone who will.

The failure to govern when in power and the failure to put forward a credible program for governing when seeking power is one of the conservative movement's central weaknesses. Until we are prepared to govern, there is little reason for people to elect us. And, especially in state and local politics, in most regions of the country, they don't.

The fourth failure of conservatives is the failure to come to grips with the decisive issues of our time: America's decline and decay as a nation. This failure is somewhat ironic, since one of conservatives' principal activities for generations was warning of decline.

But now, when decay and decline are becoming subjects of everyday conversation, where are conservatives? Throughout the Reagan administration, most of them were singing "Happy Days are Here Again." It's morning in America, we're standing tall, and similar banalities were the order of the day.

The public sees it otherwise. Thirty years ago—not a very long time—you could safely walk the clean streets of New York City. Thirty years ago, the main problems in public schools were talking in class and running in the halls. Thirty years ago, drugs meant aspirin, you bought an American car because it was the best in the world, and, in many communities, when you left you house you didn't bother locking your door.

How ancient and unreal those days now seem. Today, we are assailed by problems unthinkable thirty years ago. As real living standards fall, a family needs two incomes to maintain a middle class standard of living. Twelve year old children make hundreds of dollars each night on the street, selling drugs. Our cities have developed "no go" areas where murder is the leading cause of death among black males. Our students do poorly in international comparisons of basic skills and learning. Our trade balance stays implacably in the red as we buy foreign products, afraid of the poor quality of their domestic competitors.

What are conservatives doing to stem the tide of decline? At least inside the Washington Beltway, Nero seems to be their model. They gather at their country clubs, drive their Mercedes, and worry about making still more money. Prestigious, well-financed conservative think tanks endlessly repeat the same old nostrums. Supposedly conservative administrations have no agenda.

If conservatives do not come to grips with the issue of national decay and decline, others will. The vacuum will not go unfilled. If it is filled by someone else, we will spend another half century out of power, able to do little beyond delay and harass while the country moves away from us.

The fifth conservative failure is a compound failure. It is the failure to deal with what I call the three bleeding wounds of American conservatism. These are three widespread public perceptions: first, that conservatives are out to rape the environment; second, that we are against or indifferent to the poor, the needy, and the disadvantaged; and third, that we offer a blank check to the Pentagon.

Many conservatives will argue that these perceptions are unfair. In part, they are unfair, although there are a good many people who call themselves conservatives who are guilty of holding these attitudes. Some hold them because they benefit personally from them, because they make money by destroying the environment or building weapons that don't work. Some at least hope to save money by not thinking about the poor. Until we make it clear that conservatism is not just a convenient fig leaf to plaster over greed, we will fairly get saddled with bad reputations in these areas.

But my point here is not fairness. My point is reality. These perceptions are real, they are widespread among the American people, and they do us great harm. Too often, they give our opponents the moral high ground. We, the defenders of traditional Western values, are made to look like violators of those values and therefore as hypocrites because of these perceptions. Our failure to deal with them, to reverse them, is a strategic failure.

Finally, we have failed to present to the American people a compelling vision of the America we want to build. Often, we have failed to present any vision at all. Defining ourselves largely in terms of what we oppose, we have given no sense of what we are for. This is not primarily a matter of specific proposals and legislation, although specifics must be a part of it. It is, rather, a matter of the overarching framework of our particular vision of the City on a Hill.

Liberals have done this relatively well, and it has been a source of much of their strength. At least since the time

of Franklin D. Roosevelt, they have projected to the American people a vision of a country without poverty, without fear, without racial prejudice; a country where people are treated fairly and kindly, where they live free to pursue their dreams, supported by a friendly and helpful government; a country where government protects them from the wiles of the greedy and the oppression of the unjust, sustains them when they are sick or old, and shelters them from life's rawest blasts.

As conservatives, we snicker; yea, sure, after fifty years and at least seven trillion dollars, how far have they gotten toward making that vision real? Not very far, I would agree, and I would add they cannot get very far on the road they have taken because it reflects a wrong understanding of human nature and of the inherent behavior of governments.

But that misses the point. The vision, as a vision, remains compelling for millions of Americans. It remains a powerful political force. It does so despite its failure as a blueprint for a better society, and it will continue to do so, especially in the absence of a coherent vision of America from conservatives.

Where does all this leave us? Obviously, it faces us with a major challenge. As I noted at the outset of this litany, cultural conservatism attempts to answer the challenge. Our first book, *Cultural Conservatism: Toward a New National Agenda*, tries to come to grips with all six failures. Cultural conservatism offers a broad agenda, proposing policies on the family, education, institutional design, economics, welfare, conservation and environment, religious and moral institutions, crime and punishment, military reform, and community preservation and creation. The agenda is also deep, in that by trying to see both problems and solutions from a cultural perspective, we get at causes, not just symptoms.

Cultural conservatism has no religious litmus test. We have taken some criticism for this stand from a few figures on the Religious Right. I would note that most Religious

Right leaders have supported us, understanding that we need to be able to carry our message to secular Americans. Many recognize that if we can approach the non-religious on the basis of shared values, we can create a dialogue and a shared language through which we may also be able to talk about our faith. Christ Himself was careful to talk to people in language they could understand, and He went to great efforts to seek out those who had turned away, who were deemed "unclean." To say we should not work with any who do not share our religious belief smacks, frankly, of Phariseeism.

I must note in this regard one example of how we can benefit from working with people who do not share our faith. Dr. Bernard Nathanson's film *The Silent Scream* has done more to help the pro-life cause than any other single work. Yet during all the years when he changed his mind (Dr. Nathanson was at first pro-abortion), reached the right moral conclusion and made his film, he was an opened and professed agnostic. Should we have refused to work with him because of that? I say no. Today, he is a believing Christian. Would he have become one if we had refused to work with him? I suspect not.

Therefore, let me repeat: a person can be a cultural conservative on a purely secular basis. He can be as full and acceptable a cultural conservative as someone who derives his political beliefs from religious faith. There is no religious litmus test for being a cultural conservative, nor will there be one. I say this, by the way, as a practicing Christian, a deacon in my church, and a person whose political views and work are very much a product of his religious faith.

Cultural conservatism is a commitment to govern. It calls, repeatedly, for actions by government. Consistent with conservative beliefs and plain facts, it prefers action at the lowest level: local and state government, working with non-governmental institutions. But it also calls for actions by the federal government when the situation requires them.

Government at all levels has a legitimate and necessary role in society. It has overstepped its legitimate role in recent years, especially at the federal level. But cultural conservatives are not anarchists. We do not envision a society without government. And we distinguish between good and bad government; it is not all automatically bad to us, and good government is possible.

We recognize, further, that government necessarily reflects some set of values. Simply defining crimes reflects values. We believe the values our government reflects should be those on which our nation is built: traditional, Western, Judeo-Christian values.

Cultural conservatism acknowledges national decay and decline as *the* issue confronting our generation, and its agenda is focused on the task of reversing that decline. That shines forth in virtually everything we address: in education, in the family, in policy toward communities, in economics, everywhere. Most important, cultural conservatism recognizes the root cause of our decline: our steady move away from traditional culture, which is to say, from functional culture. No economic gimmickry can reverse a cultural decline; only cultural renewal and restoration can. Generating renewal and restoration is what cultural conservatism is all about.

Cultural conservatism stanches the three bleeding wounds of the conservative movement. It is explicitly pro-environment. We want clean air and water, careful use of scarce resources, healthy farmland, and an outdoors we can all enjoy. We disagree with the environmental movement on the means and methods in many cases — we generally prefer incentives that make use of the free market rather than bureaucratic controls—but we share its concerns.

We accept the obligation to the poor and the less fortunate that welfare represents. It is impossible to favor traditional Western values and do otherwise. Concern for the poor is part of those values, going back to the Old Testament. Again, we often disagree with liberals on means, and we stress the importance of using material

help to strengthen rather than undermine traditional values. But we give high priority to helping those who need assistance.

We favor strong, thorough military reform. For years, conservatives have rightly warned about the way large government bureaucracies behave. Cultural conservatives recognize that the Defense Department is the nation's largest bureaucracy, and that it behaves no differently from any other bureaucracy. That means it does what is most comfortable internally — what gets the largest budget, builds the biggest empires, creates the most career opportunities, etc..

Military reformers from Gary Hart through John Lehman have called for "de-bureaucratizing" the defense department. They are right. We need to introduce more competition in weapons design and procurement; insist on tough, realistic, and honest operational testing of new weapons; cut the size of the major headquarters, starting with the Pentagon itself; and reduce the bloated mid-range and senior officer corps. American companies are finding that they have to do these things to survive in an era of tougher international competition. The Pentagon needs a dose of the same medicine.

Finally, cultural conservatives offer a vision of the America we want. In each policy area we talk about our goals. Some of the goals included in our first book are:

> restoring the traditional, stable family, where one parent is normally in the home, as the environment in which the vast majority of children are raised; restore the economic well-being of the family by making it possible for the single wage-earner families to maintain a middle-class standard of living; reduce and eliminate the permanent underclass by integrating its members into the cultural and economic mainstream of American society; give religion and traditional morality the respect which they have earned by their works; build a society largely free not only of violent crime itself, but of fear of violent crime; (and) assist existing communities to preserve themselves, especially in the face of dislocating economic change.

We offer means of reaching each of these goals, but the means are not the focus. The goals are the focus, and they give other Americans a picture of the kind of society we want. This is something we need to do more often and more clearly, and we will. But we have made a beginning.

We have more than begun to address the six failures of the conservative movement. We have moved to resolve each of them, to build a new conservatism around which we can form an enduring, majority, conservative coalition. Our goal is to form the successor to the Roosevelt coalition, a coalition that can dominate American politics for the next half century. That is the political task facing both liberals and conservatives, and it is a race that conservatives must win. Through cultural conservatism we can win, because cultural conservatism is built upon a great political change already going on: the change from a politics built around economics to one built on issues of values, morals, and culture.

This watershed shift in the nature of American politics showed itself clearly in the 1988 elections. The decisive issues were not economics but the furlough of Willie Horton and the Pledge of Allegiance. These were symbolic and somewhat simplistic cultural issues, but they were cultural issues nonetheless. The voters understood what the symbols stood for. Further, while conservative ballot initiatives based on economics (mostly tax initiatives) lost, culturally conservative initiatives on issues such as crime and abortion won.

Because cultural conservatism reflects the cultural values of most Americans, it offers the basis for a powerful majority coalition. Unfortunately, some conservatives inside the Washington Beltway have not seen this. Part of the reason is that many of them have become far removed from their own roots and from the culture of most Americans. The "inside the Beltway" culture, built around status, career, money and power, has absorbed many Washington conservatives. This has left them not only

blind to the political potential of cultural conservatism but also personally uncomfortable with the values it espouses.

Meanwhile, at the state level, cultural conservatism is catching on rapidly. Groups such as the Southern Republican Exchange have found that it appeals powerfully to their membership, made up of state and local Republican officeholders from throughout the South. Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, who is emerging as the leader of a new school of active, practical, innovative Republicanism, is a strong backer. Legislators from both parties from states including Idaho, California, and Washington have called or written to express their interest in culturally conservative state policies. Invitations to make presentations on cultural conservatism are pouring in.

Perhaps the model for cultural conservatism as a political force is Chairman Mao in reverse. His theory for taking over China was to capture the countryside; isolated, the cities would fall. If we think of America outside Washington as the countryside and "inside the Beltway" as the city, his theory may be right. The countryside likes cultural conservatism. It resonates deeply with our countrymen's values and culture, their problems and desires for innovative solutions, their sometimes inarticulate but very real vision of America.

Washington, including many of its conservatives, is more and more the Imperial Capital, caught up in its own rituals and self-importance, its courtiers' struggles for status and power, the allure of wealth and the glitter of image. Isolating itself more and more through the contradiction between its words and its actions, it is becoming ripe for moral defeat and political dissolution.

Carpe diem.

Variety and unity in culture

BY RUSSELL KIRK

When we use this word *culture*, what do we mean by it?

Does "culture" signify refinement and learning, urbanity and taste?

Or does this "culture" mean the folkways of a people?

Nowadays the word may be employed in either of the above senses; nor are these different significations necessarily opposed one to the other.

Our English word *culture* is derived from the Latin word *cultus*, which to the Romans signified both tilling the soil and worshipping the divine. In the beginning, culture arises from the cult: that is, people are joined together in worship, and out of their religious association grows the organized human community. Common cultivation of crops, common defense, common laws, cooperation in much else—these are the rudiments of a people's culture. If that culture succeeds, it may grow into a civilization.

During the past half-century, such eminent historians as Christopher Dawson, Eric Voegelin, and Arnold Toynbee have described the close connections between religion and culture. As Dawson put it in his Gifford Lectures of 1947,

> A social culture is an organized way of life which is based on a common tradition and conditioned by a common environment .... It is clear that a common way of life involves a common view of life, common standards of behavior and

> common standards of value, and consequently a culture is a spiritual community which owes its unity to common beliefs and common ways of thought far more than to any uniformity of physical type .... Therefore from the beginning the social way of life which is culture has been deliberately ordered and directed in accordance with the higher laws of life which are religion.

Dawson gives us a quasi-anthropological definition of culture. At the beginning of the twentieth century, historians and men of letters would have raised their eyebrows at this sociological approach. The principal dictionaries of eight decades ago offered diverse definitions of the word—the agricultural meaning, the biological one, the bacteriological one, and others; but the common apprehension of "culture" was much like this: "The result of mental cultivation, or the state of being cultivated; refinement or enlightenment; learning and taste; in a broad sense, civilization; as, a man of *culture*."

This latter employment of the word, connoting personal achievement of high standards in manners, taste, and knowledge, conjuring up the image of the virtuoso, is not archaic. But the sense in which the Center for Cultural Conservatism uses the word is anthropological, rather than personal. To clarify matters, we may take as a working definition that offered by H.J. Rose, in a footnote to his *Handbook of Latin Literature* (1936):

> By 'culture' is meant simply a mode of communal life characteristically human, i.e., beyond the capacity of any beast. Refinement and civilization are not implied, although not excluded. Thus we may speak alike of the 'culture' of the Australian blacks and of the modern French, distinguishing them as lower and higher respectively.

Like professor Rose, the advocates of cultural conservatism recognize that though in our Father's house are many mansions, they are not all on the same floor. The culture which they hope to conserve is a complex of beliefs, institutions, customs, modes of production and distribution, laws, literature, manners, and other elements that make possible the functioning of our present society. This

existing culture is rooted in earlier Hebraic, classical, and Christian cultures. For the most part, it came across the Atlantic from Europe. Commonly we call it "Western" culture—although that term is rather an awkward one. (Is Jerusalem "west"? West of what? We used to say that Jerusalem lies in the Levant—that is, the East.)

Still more specifically, friends to cultural conservatism, as it is expressed in this small book, aspire to preserve and renew the "permanent things" in the American social order: the American mores praised by Alexis de Tocqueville, the framework of laws, the private rights, the hearty old customs, the freedoms of religion, the patterns of family affection, the diffusion of private property, the protections against arbitrary power, the vigor of local community, the confidence that life is worth living. They believe that there exists a moral order to which humankind should conform. They do not believe that life is mostly an exercise in getting and spending. Nor do they think that culture was born yesterday.

This attachment to folkways, traditions, and well-rooted beliefs and institutions may be regarded as a kind of sociological understanding of culture — although not the sociology of the positivists. It is concerned, that is, with a general and popular culture: a culture in which the mass of Americans participate, whether or not they are quite conscious of being in this sense "cultured" or "acculturated". Marxists might attach to this pervasive American culture the label "bourgeois". The tag is not quite accurate or adequate; for that word, of nineteenth-century European usage, implies a certain social pattern that scarcely exists today and never did prevail in the United States, with the possible exception of yesteryear's Boston, Philadelphia, or Charleston. However that may be, bourgeois culture has had many merits; and if Marxists wish to call the popular culture of the United States "bourgeois", there is little point in denying that soft impeachment. To put the matter another way, cultural conservatives endeavor to uphold the better features of American civilization, of the life we know and live —

recognizing, true, that not everything in today's culture deserves praise, and that prudent, gradual change may be the best means for preserving the permanent things.

Yet intelligent cultural conservatives make themselves defenders of something more than the common culture which the American population has inherited. For they try to uphold, as well, that understanding of culture which champions the cultivation of mind and conscience; what is often called "high culture". If we may call the popular culture democratic, let us call this higher culture aristocratic: both aspects of culture are necessary to an enduring civilization.

To understand the relationships between "culture" as the word is understood by anthropologists and "culture" as that word is understood by the champions of high achievements of mind and art, we need to turn to the chief poet of this century, who was also a social critic of eminence: T.S. Eliot. His slim book *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* I once commended to President Nixon as the one book he should read while in office.

Eliot tells us that we should regard culture in three senses: that is, whether we have in mind the development of an individual, or of a group or class, or of a whole society. This last, society's culture, is fundamental, Eliot adds. Since fairly early in the nineteenth century, reflective people have tended to regard "culture" as something to be sought. Just what is it that the champions of culture seek? Why, "improvement of the human mind and spirit."

Thus with Eliot we move beyond the anthropologists' employment of *culture* and beyond the employment of *culture* by moralists and men of letters to some understanding of the interdependence of the varieties or senses of the concept "culture". The question is not really one of conflict between "democratic" and "aristocratic" modes of culture. A nation's culture may be diverse, seemingly, yet the personal culture cannot long survive if cut off from a group or class; nor may the high culture of a class endure if the popular culture is debased or is at odds with personal and class cultures.

"Cultural disintegration is present when two or more strata so separate that these become in effect distinct cultures; and also when culture at the upper group level breaks into fragments each of which represents one cultural activity alone," Eliot writes. "If I am not mistaken, some disintegration of the classes in which culture is, or should be, most highly developed, has already taken place in western society—as well as some cultural separation between one level of society and another. Religious thought and practice, philosophy and art, all tend to become isolated areas cultivated by groups in no communication with each other."

That lamentable process of disintegration and separation has continued, with increased speed, since Eliot wrote those sentences forty years ago; it is especially conspicuous in American higher education. If the decay goes far enough, in the long run a society's culture sinks to a low level; or the society may fall apart altogether.

In the preceding passage, Eliot refers to two phenomena of cultural decadence: first, throughout western society, decay of the classes that formerly maintained what I have called "aristocratic culture"; second, the splitting of what once was a common culture in sub-cultures or perhaps counter-cultures. You and I live, at the end of the twentieth century, in an era when the general outlines and institutions of our inherited culture still are recognizable; yet it does not follow that our children or our grandchildren will retain a great part of that old culture.

To put Eliot's argument into simple terms, any healthy culture is represented at its upper levels by a class or body of persons of remarkable intelligence and taste, leaders in mind and conscience. Often such persons inherit their positions as guardians of culture: to borrow a phrase from Edmund Burke, these are the men and women who have been reared in "the unbought grace of life." I have known families in Scotland or in Italy who have been eminent in a high culture for seven centuries or more. Will they survive into the twenty-first century? The ideologues of our era would prevent their survival.

Either within such a cultured class, or sometimes temporarily outside it, there should be found individuals of cultural attainment whose private talents may contribute much to the improvement of the human mind and spirit. Yet such persons cannot somehow sustain culture on their shoulders, Atlas-like, if they lack the support of a class or group, or if the tendency of the great mass of people is in an opposite direction. As Eliot puts it, "People are always ready to consider themselves persons of culture, on the strength of one proficiency, when they are not only lacking in others, but blind to those they lack."

Beyond the men and women of personal culture, beyond the high culture of class or group, lies the democratic culture of the folk—if we are to speak, like anthropologists, of cultural folkways. The popular culture ordinarily had its origins, perhaps long ago, in the concepts and customs of a cultural aristocracy, much as the Children of Israel received their culture from Moses and Aaron. Culture does not rise from the humble to the dominant. And yet once cultural beliefs, traits, customs, and institutions have taken hold among a people, the most ardent adherents and defenders of an inherited culture may be obscure men and women, members of the democratic culture, who maintain the good old cause. Within the Catholic Church today, for instance, a struggle occurs between innovators who think themselves intellectually emancipated, and orthodox parishioners who make no claim to special theological insights.

But if the mass culture, the democratic culture, becomes much alienated from the culture of the talented individual and the culture of the educated classes—why, presently the mass culture falls into decadence. That has been happening swiftly in recent decades, in this land and elsewhere. Thomas Molnar, in his most recent book, *Twin Powers*, describes the consequences:

> *Culture* has come to mean, of course, anything that happens to catch the fancy of a group: rock concerts supposedly for the famished of the third world; the drug culture and other subcultures; sects and cults; sexual excess and aberration;

> blasphemy on stage and screen; frightening and obscene shapes; the plastic wrapping of the Pont-Neuf or the California coast; to smashing of the family and other institutions; the display of the queer, abject, the sick. These instant products, meant to provide instant satisfaction to a society itself unmoored from foundation and tradition, accordingly deny the work of mediation and maturation and favor the incoherent, the shapeless and the repulsive....

And Dr. Molnar adds that if this sort of culture "spreads out in moviehouse, museum, festival, press, and university, the reason may be that it embodies society's ideal ...."

Molnar is writing here of what commonly is called the counter-culture—an anti-culture which may extend to the very people who are supposed to set cultural standards. This revolt against our inherited culture often hardens into a detestation of those classes and groups, and their standards, which once upon a time shaped the thought and the taste of the whole society. Eliot touches upon this ideological hostility toward any sort of superior culture:

> It is commonly assumed that there is culture, but that it is the property of a small section of society; and from this assumption it is usual to proceed to one of two conclusions: either that culture can only be the concern of a small minority, and that therefore there is no place for it in the society of the future; or that in the society of the future the culture which has been the possession of the few must be put at the disposal of everybody.

We Americans nowadays seem to be indulging ourselves simultaneously in both of these prejudices mentioned by Eliot, contradictory though they may seem. For on the one hand our dominant school of educationists rejects the old intellectual disciplines as archaic, substituting for them democratic socialization and sociability or utilitarian training. While on to other hand our universities and colleges are expected to lower their standards so as to attract—and graduate—the "culturally deprived", upon the assumption that a veneer of the inherited culture will secure for them success and happiness.

My point here is that the popular culture, or democratic culture, cannot long maintain itself against a virulent anti-culture—supposing the democratic culture, the common man's culture, to be cut off from the high culture of the intellectual and artistic classes, and severed also from the leadership of remarkably cultured individuals. In such circumstances, the real arbiters of the general culture become the familiar faces on the television screens, the publishers of pornographic magazines, and assorted freaks and poseurs who deliberately contrive to make themselves notorious. To suppose that somehow a righteous Common Culture will rebuke the old guardians of culture for their treachery—why, that is to suppose a popular attachment to venerable doctrines and venerable tastes which began to decline in the eighteenth century, and is greatly enfeebled in our time.

Thus the preferences, mores, and customs that make up the democratic culture used to find their sanction in the judgment of individuals of remarkable talents, or in the manners and attitudes of a class or group of arbiters of culture. For instance, if Chaucer still is taught in some degree in America's public schools, that is not because the Common Teacher or the Common Pupil instinctively recognizes Chaucer's merits; rather, it is because, a good while ago, the people who make up school curricula and publish school textbooks decided that Chaucer ought to be studied, being a great author of historical importance; and so Chaucer has lingered on, as of "cultural value", despite large changes in the schools. If directors of curricula and publishers of textbooks should decide tomorrow to delete Geoffrey Chaucer, the democratic culture of the Representative Parent would not restore poor Chaucer; indeed, the Representative Parent might sigh with relief at the expulsion of the funny old fellow who couldn't write real English.

The culture of the crowd, then, is dependent in the long run upon the culture of the man of genius and the culture of the educated classes. It is equally true that the cultured individual and the cultured class cannot prevail—indeed,

cannot survive—if a great wall of separation is erected between them and the mass of people. What happens to a talented musicologist, say, when ninety-five per cent of the rising generation have been subjected in their formative years to acid rock, and have paid no attention whatsoever to the music of elevation and order? What happens to the class of professors of literature, say, when the accustomed reading of most of their male students has been *Playboy* or *Penthouse*?

A received culture may be betrayed by the talented individual or the culturally-schooled class of men and women, quite as fatally as by the crowd. A musicologist who casts aside the great composers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries out of his enthusiasm for electronic dissonance; a professor of humane letters who lectures obsessively on the perverse in literature—such persons are false to their duty of upholding certain norms of culture. And any hungry sheep of the democratic culture who happen to look up these mentors—well, if they are fed, it is upon the inedible, at best.

If, then, some of us are disgusted by the vagaries of people who ought to be the exemplars and preceptors of culture—mad theologians, nihilistic publishers, barbarous public men, crass and greedy architects, abstract and absurd professors of philosophy, and the like—still it will not suffice for us, as so many obscurants, to seek refuge in the embrace of Common, or Popular, Culture. For the Common Culture, commonly, decides to do tomorrow what the Uncommon Culture does today; or, worse, the Common Culture, bewildered, converts itself into the Common Counter-Culture. The defense of inherited culture must be conducted here and now, with what weapons we snatch from our walls—here on this darkling plain at the end of the twentieth century. With Eliot, we conduct

... a raid on the inarticulate
With shabby equipment always deteriorating ...

Let us recognize the varieties of culture, then, and cherish culture's diversity. But let us not forget that a nation's culture can endure only if the several elements

that compose it—and I have mentioned merely some of those diverse elements—admit an underlying unity or fidelity to a common cause. The high culture and the common culture, of necessity, are interdependent; so are the national culture and the regional culture.

We need cultural mediators, men and women who apprehend much of the higher culture but have not lost touch with the common culture. My grandfather, the manager of a branch bank in a railway town, was one such. In his house by the railway station he had a considerable library of good books in handsome cases, and he had read all those books. He subscribed to *The Bookman* and *The Literary Digest*. For a term he had studied music at an Indiana college, and played good music on his phonograph. He served influentially on the school board and the village council, courageously opposing stupidity and special interests. Anyone living in the North End, near the roundhouse and the riptrack, could come to him for advice. In short, my grandfather, Frank Pierce, was a man of culture, obscurely though he lived and died; and he was one of those cultural mediators, whose number has been diminished by that specialization which Eliot touches upon, but whose importance as a class scarcely may be exaggerated.

In conclusion, I applaud people of genuine culture, whatever their station in life; and I set my face against intellectuals, however toplofty they may be. But that is a distinction to be examined on some other occasion. What our culture requires just now is solidarity: that is, a common front against the operations of Chaos and old Night.

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The radical view of the world

BY MICHAEL LEVIN

Those who regard a doctrine as absurd will focus more on the motives which produce it than on the reasons offered by its proponents for embracing it. Thus, conservatives often find radicals much more interesting than radicalism. Nor can it be denied that the psychological origins of radicalism and the sociology of societies in which it flourishes are inviting subjects for speculation. But it must also be remembered that most people regard their beliefs as rationally justified, and based upon the same considerations they would deploy in attempting to persuade others. While, as we will see, radicalism requires a measure of double-think, in the last analysis radicals are radicals because the case for radicalism has convinced them. It is impossible to understand radicalism, or any other body of ideas, without understanding the theory its adherents find compelling.

Articulating the radical world-picture faces three specific difficulties, however. The first is the show of great internal diversity made by radicals themselves. Where Polonius had only the tragical-pastoral-historical, contemporary radicalism offers Marxism, socialism, Marxist feminism, French feminist socialism, Hegelian socialist feminism, Black third-world separatism, deconstructionism, and further permutations. As a consequence, any straightforward statement of radicalism is apt to be dismissed as overly narrow. If a fair test of a paraphrase of a

position is acceptability to the position's proponents, radicalism is impossible to paraphrase. (This of course helps to shield it from criticism.)

A related problem is the widespread reliance on the normally sound Principle of Charity: do not attribute to anyone a position too silly to be believed. Since much of radicalism is at variance with obvious facts and subject to internal logical strain—in short, it is too silly to be believed—impartial observers suspect even accurate statements of radicalism of being caricatures. This is why the citation of five or ten or fifty straightforwardly radical passages leaves so many readers unmoved; the passages are all assigned to the safe category of fringe exaggeration.

A third difficulty is the continued perception of radicalism as an economic doctrine, when, in fact, economic radicalism is moribund. Radicalism has shifted its emphasis from unionism and economic planning to relations between the sexes, relations between the races, the subtleties of "empowerment," and human nature itself. To be sure, the "scientific socialism" proclaimed by Marx, with its "laws of history," was a veneer of objectivity applied to a moral critique of industrialism, intended to give this critique the glow of science. This moralizing impulse has been a constant in radicalism, so many themes prominent in today's radicalism were nascent in Marx. But many themes are new, and contemporary radicalism cannot be viewed as an extension of the concerns that energized Union Square orators in 1904.

Bearing these difficulties in mind, it is nevertheless possible to schematize the basic radical argument. It runs as follows:

1) Society as currently constituted involves the oppression of some groups by others.

2) The oppressors are not literally conspiring against their victims, but since social reality is *just as if* they were, it is legitimate to use the language of intentional conspiracy in describing them.

3) The principal mechanism of oppression is the internalization of oppressive values by both oppressed and oppressor.

4) Because of this self-indoctrination, the apparently free choices of individuals in current society are no more authentic than the actions of brainwashed prisoners of war.

5) This self-indoctrination is so thorough that objectivity about society is impossible save from the radical perspective; social reality itself is significantly constituted by oppressive illusions.

6) Practical neutrality is also impossible. All social institutions, practices and norms exist to serve one side or another. Because objectivity is impossible anyway, misrepresentation is a permissible means to social change.

7) Society determines the character of individuals, not vice-versa. Social relations deemed oppressive cannot be explained in terms of the traits of its individual members, and biological explanations of these relations are intended [see (2)] to rationalize oppression.

Each application of this scheme of course requires the separate specification of the oppressed and oppressor groups, the indoctrination by which oppression is maintained, the manner in which social institutions serve oppression, and the fallacious explanations of social reality intended to support the oppressor. Equally obviously, the scheme must be adapted and modified to fit every case—racial, sexual, political, legal—to which radicals wish to apply it. Nonetheless, I believe it captures the essence of the radical view of the world.

The clearest embodiment of these ideas is radical feminism.[1] At the risk of wearying the reader with yet another discussion of this overworked doctrine, let me remind him of its main tenets. It maintains above all that socialization rather than biology explains the patent differences between the sexes. Reactionary scientists periodically invent evidence that these differences reflect

innate sex differences, but this idea is a component of the very "patriarchal" or "sexist" ideology which shapes men and women. Men are expected to be dominant and women to be nurturing; by fulfilling this self-guaranteeing prophecy, men come to dominate personal relations and occupy most positions of political and economic power. Women remain convinced that they enjoy romantic affiliation with strong men because they have been told to. From the unblinkered radical perspective, such women are akin to prostitutes, exchanging sexual favors for money:

> For contemporary radical feminists, prostitution is the archetypal relationship of women to men .... Both men and women might be outraged at the description of their candlelit dinner as prostitution, but the radical feminist argues this outrage is due simply to the participants' failure or refusal to perceive the social context in which the dinner occurs.[2]

It is taken as obvious that relations between the sexes must change in toto.

Feminism illustrates several general features of radical thought. As previously suggested, many people reflexively classify the feminism here described as "one aspect" or "the radical fringe" of feminism, and remain impervious to the reiteration of just this theory in book after book. The theory is advanced unequivocally in Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, Simon de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. It is also presented in the works of Juliet Mitchell and Nancy Chodorow, less popularly known figures who enjoy stellar reputations as "theorists" among feminist academics. As Nicholas Davidson has remarked, treating such works as marginal to feminism is akin to treating the Federalist Papers as marginal to the ideas behind the American Revolution.

It is also tempting to object to this description of feminist radicalism on the grounds that, especially lately, some feminists have been emphasizing the differences between male and female moral thinking. These feminists may use these differences to advance further complaints about society, in particular the exclusion of feminine "caring" from the impersonal world of masculine "prin-

ciple,"[3] but they seem nevertheless to be granting an important sex difference and basing practical conclusions on grounds not noticeably radical.

It is instructive to see why this appearance is deceptive. To begin with, no writer associated with this supposed innovation in feminism has ever attributed sex differences in morality to anything but socialization. Wanting a sex difference in a matter as basic as moral outlook *and* a basic identity in the innate characteristics of both sexes, more astute feminists have begun to refer to sex differences in morality "in this cultural epoch." In other words, they continue to maintain that culture is the sole determinant of sex differences.

This persistence is especially puzzling in that the case for heeding the "female moral voice" does not require this voice to be socially created. Indeed, the case would be *stronger* if there were a perspective constitutionally inaccessible to men that had to be supplied by women. The only plausible explanation for feminists' failing to take just this line is that acknowledging a biological basis for sex differences in morality opens the door to biological accounts of other aspects of society which feminists wish to attribute to oppression. Unable to have it both ways, feminists prefer to retain the radical framework.

But why do feminists cling to a radical explanation of society if, as is frequently claimed, their main interest lies in what should be done about whatever sex differences may exist? This question reflects a reservation commonly expressed to those like myself who see biology as refuting feminism and radicalism generally. Just because there are innate sex differences or other innate tendencies in man, like aggressiveness or a desire for status, does not mean they ought to be encouraged. All sex differences are statistical, whatever our natural inclination to reinforce them; the feminist protest (according to this sympathetic hearing) is against the pigeon-holing of individuals on the basis of general preconceptions.

To be sure, any degree of sexual differentiation is consistent with the demand that people be treated as individ-

uals. However, restricting feminism to this demand — abandoning the feminist theory of how we got where we are—again means abandoning the correlative indictment of society as oppressive. Questions of fact may be logically distinct from questions of value, but in practice, and especially in radical practice, the two are closely intertwined. Social policy, like medicine, bases its prescriptions on diagnoses, and diagnoses are factual theories. To describe an arrangement as "oppressive" is to condemn it because it came into being and continues to operate by frustrating the wishes of large numbers of people. It makes as little sense to brand a social arrangement "oppressive" while remaining neutral about what creates and sustains it, as it does to brand a man a murderer while remaining neutral about whether he caused anyone's death. This point has been emphasized in an important but neglected book by Claire Fulenwider, *Feminism in American Politics*.[4] Prof. Fulenwider rejects the idea that feminism is merely an attitude toward equality; it is, rather, a "political ideology ... a set of beliefs which describe present reality ... explain present reality—that is, show how it has developed historically—[prescribe] in what ways it is good or bad [and] posit a plan for changing present reality."[5]

It is now clear why up-to-the-minute feminists tie themselves in knots by acknowledging sex differences basic to the human personality while denying biology any role in creating them. These feminists wish to maintain their core belief that society is oppressive, and this belief is inconsistent with the idea that society is the way it is because it reflects rather than frustrates the innate desires of men and women. In my experience, incidentally, it proves fiendishly difficult to elicit a straight answer to these questions from "moderate" feminists. Perhaps the best tactic when encountering one is to ask her if she recognizes significant biological sex differences. If she says "No," she is no moderate after all; if she says "Yes," ask her whether it is these differences, or oppressive socialization, which accounts for sex roles. If she says socialization, ask her what became of the biological differences. If she

now denies there are any, remind her of her initial concession. Keeping such a conversation on track is far more difficult than I'm making it sound here; good luck.

This moral about the factual basis of feminism extends to all forms of radicalism. Radicalism and conservatism are not alternative "visions" of reality in irreducible conflict, as Thomas Sowell has recently argued they are.[6] Radicalism in its various manifestations always rests upon a *specific factual theory* of the origin and purpose of some social phenomenon, and collapses if this theory is wrong. To take an instance far from feminism, some radicals have argued that *Brown vs. Board of Education* (the 1954 Supreme Court decision to end segregated education) was the Supreme Court's response to the needs of a newly industrialized South for a better educated black labor force.[7] Whatever else one might say about this theory, it entails that Southern industrialists communicated with the Court, or at least that the Court knew of their needs. These claims can be assessed by investigating documents of the period to determine if the Court received memos from Southern industrialists, if Southern industrialists registered in unusual numbers in Washington hotels in the early 1950s (presumably for clandestine meetings with sitting Justices), and so on. It must be shown that the legal and moral arguments cited in *Brown* did not express the real thoughts of the Court. Faced with the challenge of producing evidence for such dubious claims, radicals characteristically disclaim any intent to produce a *causal* or *historical* explanation. They are offering "a new way of seeing," they say, or a new "paradigm." The best that can be said for this evasion is that it twists the idea of explanation into totally unfamiliar shape. Unfortunately, this obscurantism has been encouraged by recent developments in literary criticism and the work of Thomas Kuhn in the philosophy of science, both of which have won quick acceptance in radical circles.

Where radicalism and conservatism disagree on other matters, such as man's capacity to change himself, such disagreements, however nebulously formulated, are al-

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ways essentially factual in character. If war is a temporary deformation of human behavior due to private property (or capitalism, or imperialism, or macho toys for boys), appropriate changes in society will end it; if war is a consequence of aggressiveness innate in man, war will continue no matter what form society assumes. That questions such as these are too complex to be decided by routine laboratory procedures should not obscure the fact that radicalism is a factual theory about how people operate and stands vulnerable to scientific refutation.

A final moral about radicalism to be drawn from contemporary feminism involves the attitude of feminist radicals toward paid child care. Radicals have traditionally portrayed wage labor as necessarily demeaning and alienating, but when defending day-care centers they speak warmly of dedicated professionals who will raise children at least as well as harried mothers. (Mothers, for their part, "have" to work and "need" day-care, so it is not really worth discussing the merits of day-care anyway.) Ironically, it is in the case of child care if anywhere that radical animadversions against "the profit motive" and "the fetishism of money" have some point. A mother's motive for attending to her child is normally love, not a salary; a babysitter who sees her charges as a means to an income is more likely to treat children as commodities rather than persons. The entry of mothers into the capitalist labor force and paid child care are the last things radicals might be expected to endorse. Yet these are matters left to conservatives to question, as radical concern with "changing women's roles" has overwhelmed radical displeasure at economic alienation. The readiness with which radicals have jettisoned their own scathing analysis of wage labor in the interests of ending post-partum motherhood measures how far cultural values have displaced economic values in radical thought.

What seems to have happened over the last three decades is that, as the idea of oppression has expanded,

traditional radical hostility toward "petit bourgeois" values has focussed on conventional sexual norms. To some extent hostility toward monogamous marital sex has been implicit in radicalism from the beginning, although Marx himself was opposed to so much as liberalizing divorce laws. As feelings of frustration tend to diminish libido, it is only to be expected that the sexual life of mankind is unsatisfying if the vast majority of mankind is oppressed. By the same token, the institutions developed to accommodate sex under conditions of oppression must be inimical to true sexual satisfaction, just as the shuffling gait developed by a man in shackles impedes athletic satisfaction. Such was the corollary drawn by Herbert Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization* in 1955, the first work to combine Marxism with the new frankness about sex made possible by Freud. Radicalism went on to elaborate this idea into a critique of pre-marital virginity for females, fidelity within marriage, and heterosexuality itself (which was regarded as a "social construct").

This libidinization of radicalism greatly aided it in meeting opposition, especially in the 1960s. The appeal of 1960s radicalism was not the carrot of a better sex life, since few people seriously hope to lead a life of joyous promiscuity. Rather, libidinized radicalism wielded a most intimidating stick in its message that resistance to "liberation" bespeaks crossed sexual wires. Most people would prefer to think of themselves as sexually well-adjusted, and will avoid almost anything (like conservatism) which earns them the label "up tight." This area of vulnerability should not be underestimated by historians seeking to understand the influence of radical thought in a country whose radical population was and remains minuscule.

Radicals have of course expressed themselves at length about race relations in America, but it is best to approach the radical view of race indirectly. Because the sensitivity of the racial issue in America inhibits straightforward discussion, it is not widely realized that conventional ac-

counts of race—common to the popular media and the scholarly literature—approach the radical. These accounts begin with a range of discomforting facts: below-average black performance on indices of academic aptitude and vocational achievement, disproportionate black criminality,[8] the prevalence of illegitimate births among blacks. It being obvious that these conditions must be understood before they can be treated, the question of their cause arises immediately. The radical identifies himself by attributing all these conditions directly to "racism," and explaining all aspects of society having to do with race as in some way instrumental to the oppression of blacks. Radicals who concede the debilitating effects of public assistance, for example, explain the willingness of whites to subsidize blacks as a device for "colonizing" blacks, i.e. keeping them dependent.

Moderates do not regard the institutions of western society as designed to subordinate blacks. Some moderates are prepared to mention dysfunctional aspects of black culture as contributing to racial disharmony. The logic of radicalism persists, however, when these dysfunctions are explained in turn as products of white mistreatment of blacks. Blacks are said to underperform on academic tests, for example, because these tests embody unconscious "structural" bias; the work ethic did not develop in the slums (to take another example) because slavery gave work a bad name. This idea surfaces repeatedly in discussions of public policy. When prospective non-white teachers turned out to fail the National Teachers Examinations at a much higher rate than whites, it was determined on this basis alone that the test is "inherently discriminatory."[9]

But this moderate position is unstable. A test cannot be biased, structurally or in any other way, if it serves the end it is supposed to serve. The Scholastic Aptitude Tests are biased (to take another battery of tests on which blacks do poorly) only if performance on them does not predict college grades. Since virtually all disputed tests *are* demonstrably reliable predictors of achievement and

ability, the finding of bias must either be dropped, or extended to include the very concepts of ability and achievement these tests are designed to measure. It is this latter interpretation that is conventionally placed upon the data: the SATs accurately predict college grades, for blacks as well as whites, because the SATs and college grading are both tilted against blacks. The work ethic is indeed crucial to productivity, but emphasis on productivity is a Eurocentric fetish. The idea of "structural" bias can thus lead to the detection of bias in grading, in ideas of effective teaching, in insistence on "white" standards of job performance, in expectations about sexual behavior. The conclusion is inevitable that all the values of western society are warped by race prejudice. Michael Kinsley, no one's idea of a radical, speaks of "a thick vein of racial paranoia that is a quarter-inch below the surface of the white American consciousness. The Western consciousness in general, for that matter."[10]

Carried just so far, such views fall short of being radical because they fail to ask *why* western society retains values so wholly irrational. The radical again identifies himself by his ready answer: since the subordination of blacks is the only discernible effect of these values, the subordination of blacks must be their purpose. Western civilization exists *for* entrenching white supremacy.

The distinguishing feature of the radical inference is not its monomania, but its identification of the (alleged) *consequences* of social phenomena, however unplanned and unforeseen, with their *purpose* or *function*. This fusion (or confusion) is encapsulated in Marx's idea of "objective function," as in "The objective function of workplace safety rules is to insure a healthy work-force for capitalism, even though no one involved in promulgating these rules ever thought of them in such terms." Like many solecisms, "objective function" can disorient anyone accustomed to the literal use of language. The phrase sounds rather scientific; it suggests superior familiarity with the way society actually works (a suggestion not raised by most radical

ideas);and it lets the radical sound as if he appreciates the importance of human purposes while at the same time discounting them completely. Most conveniently, it permits the radical to criticize society without requiring him to show wrong-doing on anybody's part. The radical can help himself to the language of moral indignation without having to substantiate his indignation in the expected ways.

The idea of "objective function" proposes an analogy between social processes and the functioning of bodily organs. Ears exist in order to transmit sound to the brain without consciously intending to do so, so why can't social institutions serve unconscious unintended functions? The trouble with this analogy is that, while the transmission of sound is indeed an obvious effect of the ear's activities, there is more to the ear's being *for* hearing than its having this effect. Supporting eyeglasses is another effect of ears, but ears aren't *for* supporting eyeglasses. The difference is that ears exist *because* they transmit sound to the brain, whereas their ability to support eyeglasses has nothing to do with why ears exist. If eyeglasses were customarily glued to the side of the head, if eyeglasses had never been invented at all, people would still have ears. But if ears had not transmitted sound effectively, people would not have ears. Unresponsive ears would have been eliminated by evolution or, in a more theological view of nature, rejected by a God who wished to endow the human race with hearing. So the radical bent on "de-mystifying" the covert oppressive function of safety rules or aptitude tests or middle-class values must show more than their allegedly oppressive consequences. He must also show that these institutions exist *because* they oppress—that they would not have developed did they not supply healthy workers for capitalism, or stigmatize blacks, or lead to the subordination of some other group.

Contemporary "critical theory" prides itself on having advanced beyond naive conspiracy theories, but the pressure to elaborate its claims about covert functions invariably leads it back. Radicals might conceivably argue

that oppression enhances the overall fitness of a society, and is consequently selected for in the competition between forms of society just as biologically adaptive organs are selected for. But oppression can enhance societal fitness most in cases where it strengthens social bonds, increases feelings of solidarity, and has other related advantages which the radical would be loathe to ascribe to it. There remains only the theological answer: oppressive institutions exist because some powerful but hidden intelligence *sees and desires* their oppressive effects. However radical analyses begin, they always end by attributing to individuals a degree of cunning which any naive Marxist would endorse:

> [T]he really important role that women serve as housewives is to buy *more things for the house*. In all the talk of femininity and woman's role, one forgets that the real business of America is business. But the perpetuation of housewifery, the growth of the feminine mystique, makes sense (and dollars) when one realizes that women are the chief customers of American business. Somehow, somewhere, someone must have figured out that women will buy more things if they are kept in the under-used, nameless-yearning, energy-to-get-rid-of state of being housewives.[11]

It is evident that, for the radical, there is only one question to ask about any facet of society: "To whom does it give power, and over whom?" The origins of this obsession with power are best left to psychologists, but if one seeks the assumption buried beneath even this obsession, I would suggest that it is monism about human motives. The radical believes there is only one end pursued by man for its own sake, and he identifies it with dominion over others. This is the basic mistake in the radical outlook, it seems to me. There is no single reason which explains everything people do, no Ariadne's thread to connect every chamber in the labyrinth of society. The plain fact is that people act for a variety of reasons—some noble, some base, some selfish, some altruistic, and some unclassifiable. Sometimes people do things just because they are interesting. The range of intrinsically satisfying activities

—from computer hacking to playing music to hitting a baseball to closing a deal—is as wide as the world man has made. Modern psychology recognizes as much, in its somewhat off-putting terminology, when it speaks of the variety of "unconditioned reinforcers" to which human beings respond. A number of pre-modern thinkers, emphatically including Karl Marx, were misled by the success of Newton's streamlined physics into searching for a single determinant of history. Radicals found it in domination, and until they abandon the search itself, they are destined to wander in darkness.

NOTES

1. I discuss feminism at great length in *Feminism and Freedom* (Transaction: New Brunswick, N.J., 1987).

2. Allison Jaggar, "Prostitution," in Marylin Pearsell, ed., *Women and Values: Readings in Recent Feminist Philosophy* (Wadsworth: Belmont, CA, 1986), pp. 115-117.

3. See Carol Gilligan, *In Another Voice* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 1982). This supposed feminist discovery is prominent in Freud, and is one of the "sex stereotypes" feminists continue to deplore. It might be noted that morality *by definition* involves general principles, so that only competing systems of principles can be competing *moral* views. Not every basis for action is a morality; animals decide what to do on the basis of momentary impulse and, in the case of social animals, their relations to other members of the pack—but animals don't have moralities. Without realizing it, feminists are arguing in effect that women are less concerned with morality than men. This may well be *true*, but it should be stated in less misleading language than is used by feminists.

4. Clair Fulenwider, *Feminism in American Politics* (Praeger: New York, 1980).

5. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

6. Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions* (Basic Books: New York, 1986).

7. Lynn Marcus (a.k.a. Lyndon LaRouche) made this suggestion during a public debate in the early 1970s, in my presence. A less flat-footed version of the argument that law responds to the "objective needs" of the economic order may be found in *The Prophet Outcast*, the third volume of Isaac Deutscher's biography of Trotsky.

8. Blacks account for 35.5% of all arrests for serious crime, and 25% of all black males spend time in prison for felonies; see "The Black-on-Black Crime Plague," *U.S. News & World Report*, Aug. 22, 1988, p. 54.

9. "Teachers' Exam, Often Criticized, To Be Replaced," *The New York Times*, Oct. 28, 1988, p. A1.

10. Michael Kinsley, "It's hard to avoid the notion that GOP saw Willie Horton as a racial Issue," *The New York Post*, Nov. 1, 1988, p. 25. Willie Horton is a black rapist-murderer cited by George Bush during the 1988 Presidential campaign.

11. Betty Friedan, *The Feminist Mystique*, quoted in Irving Copi, *Informal Logic* (Macmillan: New York, 1986), p. 27.

Why the west?[1]

BY WILLIAM J. BENNETT

At Harvard University, in the fall of 1986, I delivered an address on the condition of higher education in America. I spoke particularly of the moral and intellectual mission of the academy—as claimed by the academy itself—and of my perception that some of our colleges and universities currently fall short of fulfilling that mission. Among other things, I cited the disappearance of a common curriculum in many of the nation's colleges and universities, and the resulting failure of many students to acquire, after four years of college, even a rudimentary knowledge of the civilization of which they are both products and heirs. Our students, I said, "deserve at a minimum a systematic familiarization with our Western tradition of learning: with the classical and Jewish-Christian heritage, the facts of American and European history, the political organization of Western societies, the great works of Western art and literature, the major achievements of the scientific disciplines. In short, they deserve to be taught the body of knowledge which universities once took it upon themselves as their obligation to transmit, in the name of liberal education, from ages past to ages present and future."

Following the speech, a student in the audience asked me this question, to resounding applause: Why the West? How, in this increasingly complex world, "can you justify an educational core based solely on an understanding of Western civilization?"

This is a challenge that I have heard before. As chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, I

released a report in 1984 on the humanities in higher education, called *To Reclaim a Legacy*. In that report, I had made many of the points that I raised again at Harvard: that in many of our colleges the curricula have become diffuse and directionless; that many of our colleges have lost sight of their fundamental role in conveying our common culture; and that young Americans have become increasingly removed from the very taproots of their society. The study received much attention after its release. It received some praise, but it also had its critics. In a symposium in April, 1986, at Yale University, prompted by *To Reclaim a Legacy*, a panel of professors from some of the nation's leading colleges and universities reached general agreement that the view of Western culture presented in my report was variously sexist, elitist, imperialist, bourgeois, ethnocentric, racist, selfish, and solipsistic.

In a similar vein, Stanford University in the spring of 1988 decided to alter its very popular Western culture program and replace it with a course in "Cultures, Ideas, and Values" (CIV). The result was that the core reading list of 15 significant works in Western philosophy and literature was thrown out. Instead, CIV instructors were to decide year by year what the content of the course would be. And following guidelines set down, the instructors must include works by "women, minorities, and persons of color," and at least one work per quarter that explicitly addresses the issue of race, gender or class.

This effort had begun in earnest in the spring of 1986, when a very small but very vocal group of Stanford students called on the university to abolish the Western culture program. In its place, they proposed a course that would emphasize the "contributions of cultures disregarded and/or distorted by the present program." This marked the beginning of a steady stream of charges against the existing course, against the supporters of the existing course, and against the Western tradition that sustained the existing course; again, charges of racism, sexism, imperialism, elitism, and ethnocentrism were heard.

I would like to address some of the issues raised at both Harvard and Stanford. In particular, I would like to take up the question, Why the West? Why do I believe it is important that Americans study, value, and yes, defend Western civilization?

First, we must study the West because it is ours. It is the culture in which we live and in which most of us will continue to live; it is the water, we are the fish. We live in a society governed by precepts that are products of Western civilization, and that bear witness to its moral development. The institutions that inform our conduct as a people—our schools and universities, our churches and synagogues, our communities and governments, and even our notions of friendship and family — acquired their shape through the course of Western history. The ideals and beliefs that bind us as a people — belief in human rights, the dignity of man, the inviolability of conscience — first gained currency in particular times in Western history. To understand our society, our institutions, our ways, and our contemporary controversies, we need to understand our political, social, and intellectual history. We need to know the story of Western civilization, for that is where our institutions and society developed.

To be sure, the East and other cultures have contributed importantly to our institutions and to the ideals that we hold in common. In her 1982 Jefferson lecture, sponsored while I was chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Emily Vermeule showed how even in classical times the forbears of the Western tradition drew upon other cultures around them. In no field is the Western achievement monolithic. The contribution of the Chinese to science and technology, for instance, is impressive: well before the West, the Chinese were using the iron plow, the compass, and the decimal system. These are considerable achievements, and they indicate a civilization worthy of study. Our students should study other cultures, and study them in greater depth than many do now. And to understand another culture requires more than a quick,

often patronizing "bus tour of the Third World," as a colleague of mine put it.

When they take other cultures seriously, students demonstrate another propensity of Western civilization; it has been one of the abiding strengths of the West that it is inquisitive about other cultures and other societies. Today, in the United States, we have the strongest anthropological cadre in the world. Western civilization is strong in part because it has learned to be open, to study and learn from others. This is good. But in studying other cultures it is best to begin with a thorough knowledge of our own; knowledge of one's own civilization provides a platform from which to view others. In the words of the American scholar Arthur E. Murphy, "We do not understand the ideals of other cultures by misunderstanding our own, or adequately enrich an intercultural synthesis by offering to it anything less than the best that we have."

This, then, is the first reason that we must study the West; it is ours. It is where we live—culturally, socially, morally, and legally. It tells us where we have been and suggests possibilities for where we might want to go.

The second reason we must study, value, and defend Western civilization is because it is good. It is not all good. There are certain great blots on its record. In the story of the West there are injustices—catalogs of sins and errors. Nevertheless, the West has produced the world's most just and effective system of government: the system of representative democracy. In the story of inhumanity and misery that is history, in the totality of its acts, the Western achievement stands high. The story of the West is the most hopeful story. For, as Allan Bloom has written in *The Closing of the American Mind*, "America tells one story: the unbroken, ineluctable progress of freedom and equality."

Our principles are not shared the world over. Whole nations and whole political systems exist under which they are systematically denied. Indeed, though our principles represent the best of the West, the culmination of the West, there are parts of the West in which they are not fully respected.

George Orwell once said that at times the first duty of responsible people is the restatement of the obvious. So allow me to restate the obvious: not all systems of government are equal. Some forms of government are better than others; some are more just, less oppressive, more open, less resistant to needed reforms. And first among these forms of government is the liberal democracy of the West. The Founders knew this; Lincoln knew it. Many of our enemies know it. Liberal democracy is at once the world's greatest form of government and among the greatest products of Western thought and effort—evolving through painstaking, and at times bloody, efforts.

I was interested to read a recent study ranking the nations of the world according to the quality of life provided their people. Of the countries listed in the top ten, all but one were in the West. The one Eastern nation—Japan — was, like the nine from the West, democratic. Liberal democracy has become virtually synonymous with and tantamount to improvement in the standard of living and the quality and value of human life. From Poland to El Salvador to the Philippines, what Lord Bryce observed a hundred years ago is even clearer today: "The institutions of the United States..are believed to disclose and display the type of institutions toward which, as by law of fate, the rest of civilized mankind are forced to move, some with swifter, others with slower, but all with unresting feet." And the brightest beacon to that way of life has been the U.S. Constitution , the most imitated political document in the world. In the fifth century B.C., Pericles could say that Athens was the education of Hellas; in our day, it is the West—the United States especially—to which much of the world looks for guidance, hope, and inspiration.

If the western political order is the best the world has seen, so too is its philosophical tradition. For every person who seeks serious answers to such questions as "What can I know? What should I do? What should I hope for? What is man? What is good?" — indeed to the very question "How should I live?"—there is no better place to look for

guidance than the great books and deeds of the Western tradition. Otherwise, we answer these questions in a void, ignorant of the most thoughtful presentations of fundamental alternatives. There is no need to impoverish ourselves in this way. The Western tradition is an unparalleled resource from which we all can learn and profit in the way we lead our lives.

Yet, while the questions the great books pose are fundamental, the answers they provide are unpredictable. The great books are in fact a great conversation, in which the conclusions are not fixed beforehand. In the tradition of Peter Abelard, our civilization offers a great *sic et non* on the human condition. Consider: On the merits of religious life, whom do we follow — Aquinas or Voltaire? On the nobility of the warrior—Homer or Erasmus? On the worth of reason—Hegel or Kierkegaard? On the worth of sexual fidelity—Tolstoy or James Joyce? On the place of virtue in politics—Aristotle or Machiavelli? On the ends of government—Madison or Marx?

The study of Western civilization is not, then, a case for ideology; it is a case for philosophy and for thoughtfulness. Those who take such study seriously live very different lives and come to very different conclusions about particulars. The tenets of Western civilization are not etched in stone; the West is the most self-critical of cultures. Reason is exalted, and reason leads to a look, a second look, and where necessary, readjustment, redefinition, and change.

It is one of the distinguishing features of Western civilization, in fact, that it has been engaged in this dialogue, in self-examination and correction, over the centuries. The Western tradition is one of discussion and dissent as much as one of affirmation and agreement, and there is no greater example than America itself. This is a country that declared itself independent from the Old World so that a new political order might be established. That new, American order was arrived at by reason and examination, calling upon centuries of discussion and debate, and it was an order that dissented from age-old

political tradition still embodied in the European states of the time. When it was formed under the Constitution, this new country was designed specifically to accommodate—indeed, to promote—tensions between divergent political beliefs. John Adams called the Constitutional Convention itself "the greatest single effort of national deliberation that the world has ever seen."

In our two hundred years under the Constitution, deliberation has been a central characteristic of our democratic government. It was open deliberation and dissent that helped Abraham Lincoln convince the nation that slavery must be overcome; in this century, it was open criticism and dissent that enabled Martin Luther King finally to topple Jim Crow.

So again, the second reason that we should study, nurture, and defend the West is because it is good. It has not always been good; it is not now all good. But, as Leszek Kolakowski said in his 1986 Jefferson lecture:

> However distasteful our civilization might be in some of its vulgar aspects, however enfeebled by hedonistic indifference, greed, and the decline of civic virtues, however torn by struggles and teeming with social ills, the most powerful reason for its unconditional defense (and I am ready to emphasize this adjective) is provided by the alternative. It faces a new totalitarian civilization of Sovietism, and what is at stake is not only the destiny of one particular cultural form but of humanity as we have known it.

The third reason we must study, value, and defend the West is because the West is under attack. It is under attack from those who declare themselves hostile to Western progress, Western principles and, in some cases, Western religions. This attack comes from without, of course, but also from within. It comes from those so taken in by relativism that they doubt the preferability of civilization to savagery, of democracy to totalitarianism. Theirs is not an America that,despite its imperfections, its weaknesses, its sins, has served as a beacon to the world; instead, theirs is an America corrupt with a host of unholy "isms," such as racism, elitism, and imperialism. So it is, for example,

that in the Yale symposium I mentioned earlier, a speaker explained—to ecstatic applause from his colleagues—that diminishing the study of the West is one important step toward freeing the world from "the final fruits of bourgeois humanism: North Atlantic ethnocentrism."

I would like to address in particular one of the charges frequently brought against the West: the charge of sexism. In addition to being racist, imperialist, and the like, the West is said by a very vocal—and influential—minority to be characterized by a nearly pathological mistreatment of women. For example, a central feature of the 1985 World Conference on Women in Nairobi was the denunciation of Western education, Western economics, and Western defense.

But I ask: On balance, is there another culture that has been better for women? To be sure, men and women have not been treated equally throughout our past. Yes, grant the injustices of earlier times. Grant the injustices of our day. But grant as well that in America today, women enjoy more liberty, more opportunity than ever before. And grant that women in the West are far better off than women anywhere else in the world.

It has been said that the rights of man were the rights of Englishmen first. In a sense this is true: the rights that we consider self-evident today were not always so evident; they were not always so acknowledged. They were first expressed by the British, and first secured by the Americans. In the same way, it may be said that we consider today the rights of mankind were first the rights of men; the rights proclaimed two hundred years ago in this country have only in this century been fully accorded to women. But today, they are indeed the rights of both men and women.

As American citizens, women enjoy all the privileges and freedoms of democratic citizenship; they enjoy the right to vote, speak, to worship, and to associate freely. These are privileges enjoyed by neither men nor women under nearly every other form of government. And these rights were achieved, like the abolition of slavery, by ap-

peal to the principles of liberal democracy: that is, to the best in the tradition of the West. So it was that the Declaration of Sentiments, issued by the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, harked back to the principles and to the very language of the Declaration of Independence. Likewise, it was through the process of free deliberation and self-correction provided under the Constitution that, with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, women finally gained the right to vote.

So, yes, the West may be accused of grave transgressions against women. In the past it has been guilty of many. So has every civilization. What distinguished the West, however, is not that it has been especially discriminatory, paternalistic, sexist, or any of the other epithets frequently tossed around. What distinguished the West is the opposite. The West stands apart because, unlike other civilizations, it has slowly but steadily removed barriers to women. Women, like men, live as citizens of a free country; women, like men, have the opportunity to make of themselves what they will. And this includes "traditional" roles as well as others.

These freedoms exist in few other societies. In fact, the blessings of life in this country are sought by people of all races and all creeds the world over. They are sought by men and women alike. The everyday conditions of life in the West are but an aspiration, a dream, for most men and women of the rest of the world.

If it can be said that today there is one objective to which Americans should adhere, I believe that it is the defense of the West and the extension of its principles. To those who are most concerned with justice, with equality, with human dignity, there can be no greater cause. For all of us, these ideas, these Western ideas, remain still the last, best hope of earth.

1. This chapter is adapted from an address delivered at Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, April 16, 1987.

Science and western civilization

BY DR. THOMAS B. FOWLER

The roots of science have been traced many times and in many ways; but a rather strong case can be made for placing those roots in Greek civilization, where men for the first time looked at the world in a completely new way, with a theoretic rather than a mythic attitude. This new outlook on the world is so original and so radical that today we cannot imagine what life would be like without it. What is the difference? It has been expressed very succinctly by Marias:

> To mythic man, things are propitious or harmful powers which he lives with and which he uses or shuns. This is the pre-Hellenic attitude and one which the people to whom the brilliant Greek discovery has not penetrated continue to share. Theorizing consciousness, on the other hand, sees things where previously it saw only powers.[1]

What is the significance of this seemingly inoperative change?

> ... man wonders about nearby things, and then about the sum total of all that exists. Instead of circulating among things, using them, enjoying them, or fearing them, man stands apart from them, alienated from them; he inquires with awe about these nearby, everyday things which now for the first time appear to be opposite him and therefore alone, isolated by the question: "What is this?" Philosophy (and science) begins at this moment.[2]

These things exist of themselves, separate from man; they possess certain characteristics, properties, which belong to them alone. Man sees them as realities which exist; and at this point he can begin to speak of truth and falsity. Only as something which exists can things be true or false. This vision, this understanding, is the sine qua non; without things and truth, there is no science.

The road to modern science was still to be a tortuous one; however, the decisive step had been taken. And it was unique to Western man. As Zubiri has noted, European thought diverged at this point from Indo-Iranian thought:

> Just as with the Greek thinkers, there are in some Vedic hymns and in the Brahmanas and the most ancient Upanishads references to the universe as a whole ... the entire universe is fixed in the Absolute, in the Brahman. But upon reaching this point, the Indian directs himself to this universe, either to flee from it or to submerge himself in its divine root, and he makes this flight or immersion the key to his existence ... man feels himself part of an absolute totality, and reverts to it. The wisdom of the Veda has above all an operative character.[3]

The Greek wise man, in contrast, does not seek possession of the Absolute but rather possession of the truth about its nature. This led directly to Western man's insatiable desire to investigate nature in all its richness and vastness. The Orient, as Zubiri notes, instead "directed itself toward the Absolute along a dead-end road with respect to the understanding."[4]

But without a certain theological foundation, the road leading to science probably would never have been taken. That theological foundation consisted in an overarching belief in the goodness of the world, coupled with a belief in its ultimate knowability because it is a product of a God Who is good and not deceitful, whose greatness and goodness is revealed in His works. The quest to know and understand the world, therefore, is a morally good activity which can lead to greater knowledge of the Creator. Thus, there is a theological motivation to study nature and to seek and understand it.

This theological foundation was provided by the Judeo-Christian tradition, the tradition which forms such an essential part of Western civilization because it is the source of so many of its values. The confluence of this tradition and Greek thought in early centuries of the Christian era forged a new outlook on the world which set the stage for the rise of what we know today as modern science.

Yet a very deep problem remained before that science could take root. The problem concerned the extent to which the human mind, unaided, and by the extrapolation from everyday experience, could penetrate the secrets of the universe revealed to it in the Greek vision. For the ancient Greeks, it is not clear that there was any limitation. A rather long and intensive intellectual struggle was required before the situation began to clear up in the Renaissance. And it was a humiliating experience for Western man to realize that the answer was , "Not very far," a humiliation which no doubt delayed the rise of science for hundreds of years. As Zubiri has pointed out, "We now know more and better than the Greeks, precisely because we set out to know less."[5] But the important point is that man did take that step, and did put the pursuit of truth and reality ahead of his ego. And this step was taken because of the deep-seated cultural values of Western civilization: desire for knowledge of the truth about things, about the world, about reality. It is these values—and these values alone—which keep science on track and inspire its greatest accomplishments.

A civilization is a very complex entity; it arises from the interplay of many historical forces at some moment in time. But all civilizations are characterized by a set of values which govern them and a certain body of knowledge or assumed knowledge about the world. The interplay of these two largely governs the structure of the society; and when either of them changes too much that structure can be destroyed. In Western civilization the interplay has been particularly dynamic, and that has

accounted for the great vigor Western civilization has always shown and continues to show.

Science rose in the context of Western civilization and in the process of developing has generated an enormous body of knowledge about the world. This body of knowledge in turn has had an enormous influence on the civilization, both practically and intellectually. The practical influence stems from the fact that science has taught us much about nature and how to control it, with the result that we have been able to manipulate nature to our ends for several hundred years and thus have been able to create enormous material wealth. The intellectual influence has been—and thus continues to be—in the form of profound new insights into the workings of nature, its amazing subtleties and, in some respects, its totally unexpected strangeness.

Much of what we now know about the world is at variance with the knowledge upon which Western civilization was originally based. For example, consider the case of astronomy, which is always of particular importance because heavenly phenomena are such an obvious part of the world and almost inevitably become woven into a society's creation myth. For the Greeks, the earth was the center of the universe, and around it in concentric shells rotated the sun, moon, planets and stars. These heavenly bodies were more perfect than earthbound objects because they were unchangeable; and indeed their very motion—circles around the earth—was the most "perfect" type of motion and needed no further explanation. In contrast to this serene picture, we now know that the earth as well as the planets revolve around the sun in non-circular orbits. But more importantly we know that the heavens, far from being the secure redoubt of changeless entities, are in fact a place of inconceivable violence, the violence of supernovas, quasars, black holes, and of stars being born and dying, a violence masked only by the distance and time scales involved.

A greater change in a critical piece of knowledge for a civilization can scarcely be imagined; yet Western civiliza-

tion has endured—changed no doubt, but endured. Once again, we see the triumph of the fundamental values upon which our civilization is based. It is this ability to incorporate and integrate such radical changes into its fabric that makes Western civilization so resilient and so enduring. Few other civilizations have been able to accomplish this, and the world today is a clear witness to the fact: Western civilization and Western cultural values (good as well as bad) are dominant everywhere; other civilizations have not been able to resist the onslaught. The science wrought by Western civilization is in no small way responsible for this triumph; but it is ultimately a triumph of the fundamental values of the civilization which created that science.

Inevitably, a force as powerful a science will become a temptation for those who would radically restructure the society, as well as those who want the status quo to persist indefinitely—contrary to Western civilization's own internal dynamics. Typically the first group wants to turn science itself into the fundamental value of society and indeed civilization as a whole. Among this group are numbered the positivists of all stripes, the Marxists, and a wide variety of atheists and agnostics. The second group wants to take science at a particular stage of its development and pretend that no more fundamental changes in it (or rather the world view to which it gives rise) are possible. The Marxists, ironically, fall into this camp too where they make strange bedfellows with certain religious groups and assorted other factions.

A common thread of the first group is their treatment of science as a pseudo-religion. The reason for this step is rather transparent: religion and religious values are usually at the base of any civilization, our own included. If science can be widely accepted in some sense as a religion, then presto! its values—or rather a set of values assimilated to it, since science is value free—become fundamental values of the civilization.

The tendency to make a religion out of science has surfaced quite dramatically over the course of the last century with respect to the theory of evolution. As Midgely has pointed out in her fine book, *Evolution as a Religion*,

> Evolution is the creation myth of our age. By telling us our origins, it shapes our views of what we are. It influences not just our thought, but our feelings and actions too, in a way which goes far beyond its official function as a biological theory ... a surprising number of the elements which used to belong to traditional religion have regrouped themselves under the heading of science, mainly around the concept of evolution.[6]

Evolution—or rather evolutionism—has become such a surrogate religion that it often wants to loot and plunder orthodox religion, i.e. to divert the spiritual assets of religion, such as the zeal of its members and their willingness to sacrifice for it, to the service of science.

In particular, Midgely notes that there is an "escalator-type" mentality which believes that man is infinitely perfectible in his physical, mental, and moral abilities. It is not difficult to debunk this notion, but its appearance in otherwise sober scientific writing is rather striking.

For some scientists, on the other hand, there is a tendency to despair over the results of science rather than rejoice in their cosmic potential. But it is again with quasi-religious overtones. Consider the remarks of nuclear physicist and Nobel laureate Steven Weinberg:

> The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless .... But if there no solace in the fruits of our research, there is at least some consolation in the research itself .... The effort to understand the universe is one of the very few things that lifts human life a little above the level of farce, and gives it some of the grace of tragedy.[7]

The obvious question at this juncture is, "How does Weinberg know?" The answer, of course, is that he doesn't; but that is not the point. The point, rather, is that science is being used to displace religion and religious values and assume their function, albeit in a negative way.

Such "negative religion" is also promoted by the famous French biologist Jacques Monod, who argues against the existence of a God on the basis of what he deems to be the pervasive chaos and disorder in the universe.[8] Monod's argument is not particularly convincing, because the order and beauty of the universe are just too apparent. But, more importantly, it contains a suppressed premise which is common to many who advocate the science-as-religion position, one which illustrates well the absurdity of the whole idea of making science the font of values. The premise is that if we cannot understand something clearly through science, it can't be true or real (shades of Cartesian rationalism!). Here that hypothesis takes the form that if there were a God, He would have to act by means of deterministic physical laws; i.e., if the physical universe as we know it has some measure of chaos or randomness, it could not be the product of a divine Being. But this is based on a hopelessly naive view of God as creator: Monod must envision God as some superphysicist in heaven with a divine bank of computers plotting the movement of all the particles in the universe, thus giving rise to its order. Rather, as Zubiri has pointed out [9], God sees the world - past, present, and future - in a creative vision; for Him there is no physics or even nature in our sense. And the very uncertainty and chance which Monod invokes as conclusive evidence of the disorder of the universe may simply be an index of our finite minds and irremedial ignorance of the relationship of the universe to its creator: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Is. 55:8).

Moreover, the conclusion drawn by Weinberg and Monod is not the only one possible given their presuppositions and the evidence they adduce. As Midgely points out,

> Indeed, many have insisted that a full acceptance of the dark perspectives around us is absolutely necessary if one is even to start on an effective search for ... meaning. The problem of evil is not an accidental difficulty for religion: it is the starting

point from which the search that sometimes leads to religion begins.[10]

Finally, another tack of those who would replace religion by science must be noted. For this group, there is direct competition between religion and science, the outcome of which is never in doubt; science has won because science (in the guise of sociobiology) can "explain" religion, whereas religion cannot "explain" science.[11] This general position (and the underlying attitudes) is common among scientists and a large segment of the lay public; it is, nonetheless, a remarkably confused one. First, note that causal explanation, which is the type of explanation intended here, is totally irrelevant to the value of what is explained. To assume that because one has found the causal explanation of something, it is thereby rendered valueless, baseless, or useless, is a clear non sequitur. The proof is quite simple: take the case of science itself; one can easily find a utilitarian causal explanation for science ("We need it to survive and prosper"), but the value of science is not thereby affected in any way.

Moreover, this group does not ever actually provide the causal explanation they so glibly offer; it is merely sketched as a project, with a liberal dash of buzzwords thrown in. Typically, the "explanation" is in terms of religion somehow aiding in the survival of early tribes or groups, with a further speculation that religion is genetically determined. Since neither of these claims is verifiable at present, nor is likely to be so in the foreseeable future, if ever, the proponents can bask in the glory of their sophisticated explanation with little fear of refutation.

It is, finally, worth examining briefly the second part of this group's claim, that religion cannot "explain" science. In terms of strict causal explanation or deduction, that may be correct; however, as we have just seen, causal explanations are irrelevant to the value of the thing explained. What is much more important is explanation of why science arose in Western civilization and not elsewhere; and as we saw in part I of this essay, there is an explanation for that: science arose here because of the fundamental

values of truth, of the objectivity of the world, of its goodness, and of its knowability. These values are clearly rooted in the Judeo-Christian foundations of Western civilization (including its Greek roots); and so, in that sense, religion does explain science.

Another improper use of science, in some ways as dangerous as the first, stems from the belief or a priori notion that science has reached an ultimate state, that any further development of it would jeopardize some fundamental value or principle, or that further change in it is impossible. This general attitude often takes the form of denying even well-established scientific theories because they are incompatible with some doctrine thought to be essential to a particular belief system, be it religious or secular.

In this context, consider the case of Marxism, the scientific basis for which—such as it is—Marx took from 19th century physics. At that time, the paradigm of scientific explanation was Newtonian mechanics, a strictly deterministic system in which certain laws govern the motion of all things, including the atoms comprising us and the rest of the universe. Given these laws and some set of initial conditions for the particles, one could, in theory, predict the entire future course of the world. The dependence of Marx's dialectical materialism on this picture is rather obvious: everything is fixed by the strictly deterministic laws of nature; there is no need to posit God, free will, or any other non-material forces or beings. Under the Newtonian paradigm, the price of order in the universe is strict determinism.

The twentieth century has witnessed the destruction of the Newtonian paradigm, first in the development of quantum mechanics in the 1920s and 30s and then in the unfolding of chaos theory in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Quantum mechanics showed that it is meaningless to talk about billiard ball-type particles and precise initial conditions, thus destroying the whole basis for a deterministic universe. Chaos theory went one step further and revealed that a very basic and apparently self-evident hypothesis

about deterministic behavior was wrong. That hypothesis —so self-evident that no one until now thought it necessary even to state it explicitly—is that strictly deterministic laws give rise to ordered behavior. That we now know is definitely wrong. With this revelation, what remained of the 19th century paradigm collapsed altogether. The effect on Marxism would perhaps have been more telling were it not the case that Marxism's economic debacles have become so manifest that virtually no one outside of Western universities believes in it anymore.

The Galileo affair, although widely misrepresented by those who seek to attack Christianity, also illustrates the general attitude under discussion here. Galileo's observational work in astronomy lent considerable support to the Copernican hypothesis (as modified by Kepler) that planets move in elliptical orbits around the sun. The problem this posed in the 16th century was not so much the heliocentric versus the geocentric motion as the fact that the orbital motions were not circular and therefore not perfect. As a consequence, the entire explanation schema of the heavens was called into question. This schema had been inherited from the Greeks and was universally accepted for 15 centuries; so tightly had it been integrated into Christian thought that its rejection was thought to be tantamount to the rejection of Christianity itself.

In retrospect, of course, this seems to be absurd; but it illustrates well the dangers inherent in locking Christianity (or any religion)—a source of values—too closely to a particular state of secular knowledge.

Science as we know it has been a part of Western civilization for four centuries. During that time it has become an increasingly significant part, if not indeed a dominant part. This situation will continue and the pace of scientific advance can be expected to accelerate even further. The urgent problem, therefore, is how to integrate new scientific discoveries with accepted knowledge, and correlatively how to establish long-term compatibility between the fundamental sources of value and knowledge

in Western civilization (primarily Judaism and Christianity) and present and future developments in science. Clearly, repetition of the Galileo affair must be avoided at all costs. There is a twin danger; science, as discussed above, is inherently value-free. But it can be easily and superficially assimilated to some system of values, and the mixture passed off as "scientific ethics" or otherwise stamped as "scientifically based." On the other hand, science has produced knowledge about the world which is at variance with "knowledge" thought to be from the Bible or some other irrefutable source and therefore unquestionably true. Both of these dangers are quite serious because they strike at the heart of Western civilization.

The optimum way of dealing with these two dangers is the development of a new synthesis of knowledge, one which integrates science, philosophy, and theology, analogous to the synthesis developed in the Medieval period by St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Albertus Magnus and others. It can be argued that the "Medieval synthesis" of knowledge ultimately proved insufficient because it assumed that knowledge was more or less complete and, in particular, that there was no possibility of some totally new source of knowledge. That, of course, is exactly what modern science turned out to be.

The task of developing such a new synthesis will be a formidable one. Among the problems are the following:

1) the present state of science may be inadequate to permit an understanding of its true scope and limits;

2) the picture of the world which emerges from science may yet be too sketchy, especially in key areas such as psychology and neurology; there are also areas in physical science where little work has been done, such as the understanding of large complex systems;

3) radically new ideas have emerged during the twentieth century in the areas of mathematics (Godel's theorem), physics (relativity and quantum mechanics), system behavior (chaos), and chemistry (self-organization), to name only a few; assimilation of these ideas to the general intellectual framework will be a slow and

painful process because in most cases they go against the grain of 2500 years of thought about the world.

The road to the new synthesis may be long but it is important to begin now. Even if the project is not brought to fruition until the next century or beyond, there must always be a cadre of dedicated scientists, philosophers, and theologians at work on it so that the foundations of Western civilization survive and are strengthened, rather than being inundated and lost in the onrushing flood of scientific findings and the ensuing pervasive scientism.

Regarding the second point, it is unrealistic to expect that all beliefs, theories, and ideas of the past will survive intact; many, if not most, of these ideas cannot withstand the withering scrutiny which is an essential part of the scientific enterprise. This is not a cause for alarm; the whole idea of science is to strengthen and broaden our knowledge, and that inevitably entails discarding ideas and theories which do not measure up. For example, the flat earth concept and the geocentric theory are gone forever, probably with few regrets. Still, the process can be painful; and the focus is now on evolution and creation, specifically the question of whether there is some fundamental contradiction between scientific findings and key religious doctrines. As in Galileo's time, long-held views of man and the world which were thought to have solid Biblical foundation—in this case the chronology in chapter I of Genesis—have been undermined. Destroyed at the same time is an explanation schema of how we got here: we (and the animals and the sun, the moon, and stars) are the result of distinct creative acts of God which took place at a fixed time in the not too distant past.

There is an important difference in this case, however, and that is the widespread — almost universal — knowledge of evolution by the public, and specifically their knowledge of it as a "crisis" for religion. The analogous situation did not obtain in the Renaissance. Now to be sure, the general public's knowledge of details and mechanisms of evolution is weak; but their knowledge that evolution "explains" the origin of man

and other living creatures, coupled with their knowledge that other branches of science have "explained" the origin of the solar system and the universe, has seriously undermined their belief in the Bible and religious authority generally. This, of course, is due to the fact that these sources are perceived to have been wrong on so many matters of fact. The situation has been exacerbated by highly publicized affairs such as the famous debate between Thomas Huxley and Bishop Wilberforce, the "Scopes Monkey Trial," and, more recently, the media and court battles of the creationists, which seem to pit religion against science and highlight the "crisis" situation, with the inevitable result that religion is equated to obscurantism and anti-intellectualism. As Barzun has so aptly remarked, the general public has traded their absolute faith in the men in black coats for absolute faith in the men in white coats.

Since the purpose of this essay is not to resolve the problems posed by the theory of evolution, let us merely note that the presumed science-religion dispute here is a special case of a more general problem, that of the relationship between science and religion, both of which give us fundamental knowledge about our world. This problem, clearly, is going to be an extremely difficult one to resolve. One key point on which it turns is the empirical content of religious statements and, consequently, the extent to which they are verifiable or refutable. Considering a specific religion such as Christianity, note that until recently its fundamental dogmas were assumed to have considerable empirical content, viz. Christ was a man who lived in Palestine in the first century, He was a carpenter's son, He led a band of disciples, He was arrested, tried, and executed on the Cross, and His death was for the forgiveness of our sins and for our redemption. Indeed, St. Paul says, "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ not be risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (I Cor. 15:14-15, AV).

But if the statements have empirical content, they become subject to refutation; thus—as St. Paul has clearly indicated—the religion itself becomes subject to refutation. The problem this poses became acute with the development of the theory of evolution and related disciplines such as molecular biology, because these two directly concern subjects which touch the heart of religious doctrine in ways that theories of heaven do not: who we are, how we got here and what is unique about us. So if one wishes to interpret a doctrine, dogma, or Biblical passage in such a way that it has definite empirical content, such as the creation of the world in seven days, the flood narrative, or the nature of man as an essentially spiritual being, one will be making statements which fall at least partially under the competence of some branch of empirical science; and thus the truth of Christianity can become contingent upon the truth or falsity of particular scientific theories. Or at least it can if one has an a priori understanding of what those interpretations must be. Creationism rather vividly exemplifies this situation: the creationists (to their credit) clearly state what they think one must believe in order to be a Christian, and among them is the literal truth of Bible passages such as those of chapter I of Genesis. The result, of course, is a direct contradiction of not just evolution, but large parts of geology, geophysics, astronomy, cosmology, and numerous other branches of science.

Ideally, one would like to resolve the problem once and for all by determining where the dividing line lies between religion and science, and suitably interpreting the religious doctrines with empirical content so that they retain their religious meaning but are not going to be in conflict with scientific developments. Truth, after all, should be one. This is another facet of the synthesis task discussed above which has fallen to our generation and the succeeding ones. It will not be easy.

Inevitably the question of science and atheism arises. Is every scientist an atheist? Clearly not. Is atheism endemic to science, like some sort of occupational hazard? Again,

the answer is no. Has science disproved the existence of God? That is not even possible (it would be a category mistake). Why then does the connection between science and atheism come so readily to mind? The problem has roots in the backtracking discussed above, but actually is more general in the sense that many people who are not themselves scientists still point to science as the justification for their atheism.

But in what sense is it? We must distinguish two senses of atheism: (1) "practical" atheism, which is by far the commonest, and (2) "theoretical" atheism, much rarer and much more difficult. For the practical atheist, his atheism is practical attitude: he doesn't attend church, doesn't believe in revelation, doesn't accept sin in any metaphysical sense, believes science can explain anything that goes on in the world, and tends to feel very smug because atheism is "sophisticated." But he has likely not explored in any depth the philosophical problems posed by atheism, proofs for the existence of God, and so forth—problems that are very subtle and at the least require years of study and reflection to understand.

The theoretical atheist has done his philosophical homework and has concluded that proofs for the existence of God are invalid and that there is no need to postulate supernatural beings or phenomena to account for experience; again, science presumably suffices. How has science achieved this role? Quite simply, by making our efforts at living very successful. When we are sick, where do we go? To the doctor. When we want food, where do we go? To the grocery store. When we want heat, what do we do? Turn up the thermostat .... In short, we don't need God. As Zubiri has pointed out, "The successful outcome of life is the great creator of atheism."[12] Thus, people point to science as the justification for their atheism because they perceive it to be the source and explanation for the prosperity and (material) success of Western civilization, i.e. the underpinning of our successful efforts at living.

So even though science is not inherently atheistic or anything of the sort, the connection most people make

between it and atheism does have some "empirical" basis. The solution, once again, is a reintegration of science and religion in light of the situation at the end of the twentieth century. It does not help to call all of the scientists names and pout because the picture of the world which we now have does not square with what we think it should be or what it used to be.[13]

It is an ongoing task to renew Western civilization in light of new scientific discoveries and the picture of the world which emerges from them. The task has now fallen to us. The dangers are manifold; superficial and erroneous thought about science, religion, and the foundations of our civilization are rampant. We must act decisively to ensure that the precious traditions we have inherited are strengthened and passed to the next generation. This task is not for the faint of heart; there will be no quick fixes or easy answers. What will emerge are profound new insights into the world around us and the philosophical and theological traditions of Western civilization.

Notes

1. Julian Marias, *History of Philosophy*, New York: Dover Publications, 1967, p.4.

2. Ibid.

3. Xavier Zubiri, *Nature, History, God*, tr. by Thomas B. Fowler, Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1981, p. 149.

4. Ibid., p. 150.

5. Ibid.

6. Mary Midgely, *Evolution as a Religion*, New York: Metheuen, 1985, p. 30-31.

7. Steven Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1977, p. 155.

8. Jacques Monod, *Chance and Necessity*, tr. by Austryn Wainhouse, New York: Vintage Books, 1971.

9. Zubiri, op. cit., p. 265.

10. Midgely, op. cit., p.94.

11. Edward Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975, p.559-562. Cf. Midgely, op. cit., p. 113-114.

12. Zubiri, op. cit., p. 346.

13. As is done, for example, By Stanley Jaki, "The Intelligent Christian's Guide to Scientific Cosmology Intelligence and Cosmology," *Faith & Reason*, Vol. XII, No. 2 (1986), p. 124-136.

Empiricism, metaphysics, and the recovery of the whole

BY JEFFREY HART

In Robert Frost's late and great poem *Directive*, a mysterious guide, who may be Frost, escorts his companion, who may be the reader, to a clear stream up in the New Hampshire hills. The guide then offers his companion a broken drinking goblet, "like the Grail," and invites him to drink and be "whole again beyond confusion." That clear spring water is almost certainly Frost's own poetry, and the poem claims salvational qualities for it. More generally, perhaps the spring water represents the clarification that comes from true understanding.

The "confusion" Frost invites us to be "whole again beyond" certainly exists as a feature of our common experience and often seems to pervade the entire spectrum. We experience moral confusion, but also philosophical, religious, educational, legal, economic, and political confusion, and part of it all—indeed, at its center—is the sense that something is *missing*, that the whole is somehow less than the sum of its parts, that there is no center, no structure, no anchor, and no core. Yet I wish to propose, Frost-like, that there is indeed a clear stream of understanding which can clarify the issues in these multiple confusions and enable us to see our way beyond them. An understanding of the sweep of modern history and modern thought roughly since the Renaissance will go far toward such a clarification.

Sometime during the fifteenth century, the great and glorious project of modernity was launched in earnest. To put it briefly: whereas ancient Greek and Roman culture, with their extension and modification in medieval Christian culture, sought to understand the world and live according to that understanding, the modern project sought not to understand the world in its totality but to control it and use it. The ancient and medieval project issued in metaphysics, which attempted to reach a full understanding of a reality, part of which remained mysterious. The modern project issued in empiricism, which narrowed the focus of inquiry to the world which was available to the five senses and had the explicit intention of mastering it.

It is not surprising that empiricism has produced a sense of evanescing meaning, for empiricism never promised to deliver meaning of any sort, let alone ultimate meaning. It had no use for those intuitions and visions and purported revelations that had been taken into account by metaphysics. Empiricism had nothing to say about the foundations of being or the structure of moral authority. Indeed, in its most advanced twentieth-century form, empiricism regarded all of that as "pseudo-statements." Empiricism promised something else altogether, and speaking both metaphorically and literally, it delivered the goods: material abundance and enhanced physical well-being through the progressive mastery of nature.

Now it is necessary to bear in mind that virtually all philosophical options have been available to the Western mind since the pre-Socratics and no doubt earlier in unrecorded prehistoric reflection and ritual. All the options have "always" been available at least in potentiality, in their concentrated kernels. As far back as we can go, we find theism and atheism, idealism and materialism, flux and the unchanging, skepticism and faith. Materialism and skepticism are not modern. The Roman poet Lucretius was a materialist, and a thoroughgoing one. "What is truth?" asked jesting Pilate, which can be seen as a synecdoche for ancient skepticism. Heraclitus perceived the

unchanging within the flux, the still center of the turning wheel, an intimation of the logos that would be refined in later Greek philosophy.

The permanent possibilities of Western thought make their appearance very early and undergo a process of modification and refinement that explores their ramifications — from the pre-Socratics to James, Wittgenstein, and the rest of modern philosophy. It is highly unfashionable to say it, but the fact is that no other civilization has possessed anything approaching this tradition of disciplined reflection, a product in my estimation of the creative tension between reason and revelation, Athens and Jerusalem, which is at the heart of the Western tradition and which has proved continuously unsettling and creative.

Let us return to that momentous change in the West sometime in and around the fifteenth century and add the idea that one or another mode of thought becomes dominant under specific historical circumstances. As argued above, all modes of thought are *available*. The one that becomes dominant is the one that is *needed*.

We are all familiar with the famous Victorian "crisis of faith," as a result of which tens of thousands of people passed from Christian belief to some form of unbelief. Certainly formal philosophy played a part in this development, along with the work of biologists, anthropologists, archaeologists and biblical critics. But the currency of these modes and their power may have been as much a result as a cause of the emerging world-view. It would be naive to assume that the crisis arose because David Hume had thrown doubt on miracles or because the biblical scholars of Tübingen had analyzed codices. All of these currents of thought became powerful because the way had been prepared for them; they had behind them cultural decisions that gave them their resonance. The conclusions of biblical scholarship are esoteric and shifting, and the skepticism of Hume or Voltaire can be met—if there is any desire to do so. Indeed, the ancient tradition of Platonic idealism in

philosophy lived on, a fitful existence, in Cambridge Platonists such as the seventeenth-century philosopher Henry More and on into the twentieth century with Ernst Cassirer, for whom More was a hero, and others, including the astounding Eric Vogelin. And a great variety of supposedly outmoded philosophical possibilities have been expressed by the poets from the Renaissance through the present. But for the last half millennium, or close to it, what swept forward to ever greater prestige and spectacular practical accomplishment has been, in its philosophical aspect, what we call empiricism and, in its popular aspect, what John Courtney Murray called the "bourgeois atheism of the marketplace." The two levels are intimately related.

Sir Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and the other formulators of the new empiricist world-view did not engage or refute Plato, Aristotle, Anselm, or Aquinas; they merely mocked and dismissed them and turned to matters which, from their own point of view, were more important. The new direction, Bacon's *novum organum*, was able to go forward and gain speed because, as Santayana once remarked, we progress less by what we have learned than by what we have forgotten.

The great project of the empirical thrust was not a comprehensive understanding of the world but power over it: how to navigate in it, how to cure disease, build bridges and canals, disseminate knowledge through the new printing presses, build sewers, construct more powerful and efficient engines — master the visible world. Anselm's metaphysics, a profound reflection on the nature and ground of being, do not do much for the trade in spices and tobacco—but the science of navigation certainly does. This entire shift toward the visible world represented a profound civilizational choice.

During the fifteenth century, the Chinese provided an instructive contrast. They sent a fleet to India, and it returned with exotic animals for the parks and zoos of the wealthy, along with other curiosities. There was no second

voyage. The ships never went back. But after Portuguese ships rounded the Cape and reached Asia, tens of thousands of European ships followed. In 1492, Columbus thought he might reach China and its wealth. When he reached the New World, he reported that he had found the biblical Earthly Paradise. King Ferdinand was not interested in that—he wanted the gold—and Columbus landed in jail. By the seventeenth century, successful British trading voyages were returning dividends of 4000 percent to their investors. The great country houses went up. In due course, Handel emigrated to England.

In the short run, metaphysical reflection was irrelevant to the job at hand, mastery of the visible world. The empirical and utilitarian philosophies that systematized the vast project were, at least in the short run, triumphantly successful.

It is enormously exciting, even today, to breathe the fresh intellectual air of the new project and to experience the total self-confidence of its great formulators. Sir Francis Bacon dismisses the entire corpus of medieval philosophy with a derisive smile, regarding it as beneath him to engage it in serious argument. As he writes in *The Advancement of Learning*:

> And indeed, as many solid substances putrefy, and turn into worms, so does sound knowledge often putrefy into a number of subtle, idle, and vermicular questions, that have a certain quickness of life, and spirit, but no strength of matter or excellence of quality. This kind of degenerate learning chiefly reigned among the schoolmen; who having strong and subtle capacities, abundance of leisure, and but small variety of reading, their minds being shut up in a few authors, as their bodies were in the cells of their monasteries, and thus kept ignorant of both the history of nature and times; they, with infinite agitation and wit, spun out of a small quantity of matter, those laborious webs of learning which are extant in their books. For the human mind, if it acts upon matter, and contemplates the nature of things, and the works of God, operates according to the stuff, and is limited thereby; but if it works upon itself, as the spider does, then it has no end; but

produces cobwebs of learning, admirable indeed for the fineness of the thread, but of no substance or profit.

For Bacon — and he certainly had a point about late medieval scholastic thought — the goals of learning are absolutely clear, and he writes in tones that indicate that they are equally clear to all discerning men:

> But the greatest error of all is, mistaking the ultimate end of knowledge .... Nor do we mean, as was said of Socrates, to call philosophy down from heaven to converse upon earth: that is, to leave natural philosophy behind, and apply knowledge only to morality and policy; but as heaven and earth contribute to the use and benefit of man, so the end ought to be, from both philosophies, to separate and reject vain and empty speculations, and preserve and increase all that is solid and fruitful.

Sweep away the cobwebs of idle speculation. Attend to what is useful. Again and again this note is struck in the empiricist tradition—in Hobbes, in Locke, and the others. The most comprehensive and influential of them all was John Locke, who wrote decisive works on philosophy, psychology, government, and religion, all with a style so graceful and assured that its readers must have felt complete concurrence to be the only possible or even decent response. Listen to the great *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*:

> I suppose it may be of use to prevail with the busy mind of man to be more cautious in meddling with things exceeding its comprehension, to stop when it is at the utmost end of its tether and to sit down in quiet ignorance of those things which, upon examination, are found to be beyond the reach of our capacities.

This is downright and practical, and if much of traditional Western philosophy goes out the window—well, so be it. We are to get on with solid, verifiable knowledge which will be of use to the world. At the end of the road will be affluent nations of free and content citizens—a goal worth all the dubious "speculations" of Plato's academy or the medieval schoolmen.

As might be expected, so powerful a cultural force as empiricism became pervasive in its effects, not only in philosophy but in psychology, in religion (Toland's *Christianity Not Mysterious* — that is, Christianity is largely morality), and in literature. Ian Watt has argued persuasively in *The Rise of the Novel* (1957) that the novel is the fictional embodiment of empiricism (the literary expression of the new world-view) and comes into being with *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719. As Watt argues, the world of the novel is the world of the five senses. Reality is defined as what we see, hear, smell, touch, and taste.

There had been much prose fiction before 1719 — in Chaucer, Boccaccio, in the ancient world—but the novel is something genuinely new. It establishes time and place much more precisely than any previous literary genre. We find no sea coasts of Bohemia in *Robinson Crusoe*, but rather an island established in compelling concreteness. Because the novel as a genre is so precise in description, it establishes individuality with special sharpness. Homer never describes Helen: we simply know that she is the most beautiful woman in the world. We do not know the color of her hair or the slope of her nose. A novelist cannot work that way. It would create a hole in the texture of his reality, and he cannot count on common understanding.

Like empiricism, the novel is secular. Gods and angels are completely excluded from its reality, and if miracles are allowed in, a novelist must provide alternative naturalistic explanations. The novel, as Allen Tate said, puts man "wholly into his physical setting." It is the epic, said Georg Lukacs, of a world forsaken by God. It presents, in the phrase of de Sade, "*le tableau des moeurs seculaires*." And this remains true of the *form* of the novel, whatever the private opinions of the novelist might be.

In *Robinson Crusoe* we sense the sheer excitement of the early, vigorous, and self-confident empiricism. The West was possessing the material world imaginatively, even as its ships were possessing it militarily, commercially, morally. The world of fact in Defoe is as fresh as a newly minted coin. Crusoe's ship is obliged to anchor:

> The sixth day of our being at sea we came into Yarmouth Roads; the wind having been contrary, and the weather calm, we had made but little way since the storm. Here we were obliged to come to anchor, and here we lay, the wind continuing contrary, viz. at southwest, for seven or eight days, during which time a great many ships from Newcastle came into the same roads, as the common harbor where the ships might wait for a wind for the river.

Nor is it an accident that the great century of the European novel was the nineteenth, the novel growing in length and power even as a triumphant empiricism provided the basis for the economics and technology that would extend European power over the face of the earth.

This great success story has some humorous and little-known features. As customarily recounted, the story features enlightenment and progress winning the day against medieval superstition. In fact, the medieval period was relatively rational. Its folklore and fairy tales, its giants and dragons, were known to be fictions. It was the Renaissance that was riddled with superstition. Bacon and the empirical thrust indeed made their way against Aristotle and the medieval schoolmen, but also against a world in which the French royalty was guided by Nostradamus, where there was likely to be an alchemist or an astrologer in the next apartment, and where audiences flocked to plays about Faust or Prospero, or plays in which the opening featured witches or commands from a ghost. The Renaissance did recover Homer and Virgil, but also the underground occult writings of the ancient world as well.

The appeal of magic both black and white during the Renaissance clearly reflects a will to control analogous to that of the new empiricism. Faust flew through the air long before the Wright brothers did, and Nostradamus claimed to be predicting the major events of the next 7,000 years—and he was taken seriously. Francis Bacon said no, just the facts, please; though in his *New Atlantis* he did foresee, in a Nostradamus moment, a scientific utopia.

As touched upon in the mention of the persisting vein of philosophical idealism, the sweep of empiricism did not go unopposed, especially in literature. The principal British writers of the Restoration and eighteenth century, from Dryden through Swift, Pope, Johnson, and Burke, are religious and cultural traditionalists and express attitudes of varying ambivalence and hostility toward the new empiricist *Weltanschauung*. John Dryden belonged to the Royal Society of Scientists but was far from confident about the ultimate meaning of the march of science and reason, as in the opening lines of his *Religio Laici*:

> Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
> To lonely, weary, wand'ring travelers
> Is Reason to the soul; and, as on high
> Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
> Not light us here, so Reason's glimmering way
> Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
> But guide us upward to a better day.

Alexander Pope thought that the new empiricism might be lethal to traditional civilization, and in a negative version of Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue* wrote of the deadly goddess at the end of *The Dunciad*:

> Thus at her fell approach, and secret might,
> Art after Art goes out, and all is Night.
> See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled,
> Mountains of Casuistry heap'd o'er her head!
> Philosophy, that leaned on Heaven before,
> Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
> Physic of Metaphysic begs defence,
> And Metaphysic calls for aid on Sense!

In *The Battle of the Books*, in which he took the side of the classical authors against the anti-traditional moderns, Swift took Bacon's spider passage and stood it on its head. In Swift, the spider is not the medieval scholastic philosophers but rather the moderns, who ignore the permanent truths of tradition:

> So that in short, the Question comes to all this; Whether is the nobler Being of the two, That which by a lazy Contemplation of four Inches round; by an over-weening Pride, which

> feeding and engendering on itself, turns all into Excrement and Venom; producing nothing at last, but Flybane and a Cobweb: Or That, which by an universal Range, with long search, much Study, true Judgement and Distinction of Things, brings home Honey and Wax.

As Swift's classicist bee sums up the matter:

> The Difference is, that instead of Dirt and Poison, we have rather chose to fill our Hives with Honey and Wax, thus furnishing Mankind with the two Noblest of Things, which are Sweetness and Light.

The latter phrase, to embody Swift's point, had a venerable history in classical literature, and the spider-bee fable was meant to recall Aesop, whom Swift erroneously believed to be an ancient.

Samuel Johnson's sense of tradition in literature is analogous to Burke's sense of tradition in society. Both appeal to accumulated experience. Johnson believes Shakespeare to be a classic because he has been considered one for more than a century. Here is the applicable criterion:

> To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientifick, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied but length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared, and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favor.

The claim to literary greatness must rest on a consensus extending over time and thus transcending momentary fashion. What these traditionalists have in common is another theme coming forward out of the Renaissance: that literature in the form of the classics and of modern writers such as Shakespeare, who have become classics, is the principal carrier of the values of civilization. In other words, they were Humanists in the older sense of that much-abused word. As I embodied the conception in the opening paragraph of my book on Henry St. John, Vis-

count Bolingbroke, a statesman, friend of Pope, and a Humanist:

> A painting attributed to Melozzo da Forli, and now in the Queen's collection in Windsor, brings before us a scene which embodies one of the most important ideals of the Renaissance. The Duke of Urbino, Frederigo da Montefeltro, wearing his robes of state, sits in a large rectangular hall, his left hand resting on a folio. Guidobaldo, his son, about eleven years old and dressed in yellow damask trimmed with pearls, stands at the Duke's knee. Behind the Duke and his son, on a raised platform with a desk before it, sit three men. One wears the red suit of a prelate; the second, black ecclesiastical garb; the third, secular clothes. Servants and courtiers stand nearby unobtrusively. All are listening with great attention to a grey-haired humanist, dressed in black robes, who sits in a pulpit opposite the Duke. Open before him is a large book bound in crimson and adorned with silver clasps. We see that the humanist is reading aloud to his distinguished audience, no doubt from some classical or Christian author, and, as was the practice, commenting on the text as he proceeds.
>
> It is the humanist who is in the pulpit. The man of letters instructs not only the head of state, the Duke, but also the clergymen and the courtiers in the background. This scene at the Court of Urbino thus reflects an assumption central to the humanist program and to the culture of the Renaissance—that education, a literary education derived in large part from classical sources, might succeed where the medieval curriculum no longer seemed quite adequate, might succeed in establishing a just social order and in taming the dark impulses in men's hearts.

The traditional Christian Humanists lost out, at least in the short run. It is possible that "Christian Humanism" was inherently unstable, as it occurred historically, and indeed, the history-of-ideas label "Christian Humanism" suggest one reason why it may have been. In this label, the term "Christian" is adjectival, the term "Humanism" substantive. The secular classical-humanist component thus tended to edge the Christian component aside, as it did in the late Humanist Edward Gibbon.

However that may be, the Humanist program lost out, and empiricism, science, and their culture carried the day. First Greek, then Latin passed out of the required curriculum, then even English classics and classics in translation went out, a development that may now have reached its furthest point. That there is widespread uneasiness about all this is attested to by the immense interest recently generated by Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*.

In my own view, however, we may be reaching the end of the great era of empiricism, reaching another decisive shift in Western thought and consciousness. Of course empiricism will persist as a method, and its accomplishments will unfold still further, but it will cease to be an exclusive habit of the mind. We are beginning to perceive the inherent limits of empiricism and to experience the inevitable moral, religious, philosophical, and political confusions that arise from empiricism's programmatic narrowing of focus. The signs of this are becoming widespread, at the popular level in a sense of meaninglessness and the attendant feelings of anxiety, and also at the highest levels of intellectual reflection. There follow here a few striking examples among the many that could be adduced.

It is one of the ironies of twentieth-century thought, for example, that Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (1921), one of the most important works of philosophy produced in this century, at once expresses and sums up the most advanced form of the empirical tradition and then, reaching its utmost borders, turns decisively against it.

An extreme form of empiricism, the mode of philosophy known as logical positivism, arose in Vienna between the wars and rapidly spread throughout the Western world. It became dominant in the academy, and the professional philosophical organizations were dominated by its partisans, though they were harassed by dissidents of various philosophical sorts. Logical positivism is a scientific philosophy and asserts that only

empirically verifiable statements are true. It also submits all statements to rigorous logical analysis, classifying as "pseudo-statements" all that do not meet these stern tests. As Otto Neurath of the Vienna school wrote in 1931:

> All the adherents of a rigorous empiricism reject anything that smacks of the 'absolute', whether the subject matter relates to the world of the *a priori*, or the world of the categorical imperative .... The representatives of a scientific [approach to the world] know only science and the clarification of scientific methods, and this clarification is all that remains of old-fashioned 'philosophizing'. What can not be regarded as unified science must be accepted as poetry or fiction.

The next year Rudolph Carnap, another member of the Vienna circle, wrote in *Erkenntnis*:

> Through the development of modern logic it has become possible to give a new and sharper answer to the question of the validity and justification of metaphysics .... In the realm of metaphysics (including all value-theory and norm-science) logical analysis leads to the negative conclusion that *all the alleged statements in this area are totally meaningless.*

Though these torpedoes were aimed principally at Heidegger, the logical positivists meant to construct a philosophy to end philosophy, a streamlined Bauhaus-style philosophy from which virtually all of prior Western philosophy was *ipso facto* excluded. No Corinthian columns were permitted here to make Plato and Aristotle comfortable. By the strict terms of positivism, the statements of Plato and Aristotle are mostly "meaningless."

But something marvelous and strange happened to logical positivism in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. The most brilliant mind of the Vienna group, he had a distinctive, sometimes monk-like personality. After the first World War, he worked at menial jobs as a hospital porter and orderly. The *Tractatus*, his only work published during his lifetime, is a strange object indeed for a major philosophical work. In length it runs about ninety pages. Most of the way, it consists of a terse, dazzling exposition of logical positivism, a virtuoso demonstration of the Vienna method. This is the part of the *Tractatus* that people like

Rudolph Carnap and, in England, A.J. Ayer and Bertrand Russell took seriously. But the climax of the *Tractatus* comes in the last ten pages, where, having pushed the method to its outermost limit, Wittgenstein affirms that there is something—much!—more. Here he speaks of a mystical or higher reality (*das Mystiche, Hocheres*) which exists outside of the "world" knowable by the methods of logical positivism.

Wittgenstein evidently had a powerful mystical experience sometime before World War I, perhaps such an experience as Socrates had. The *Tractatus*, accordingly, while fully giving positivism/empiricism its due, reaches its outer limits and turns into a cultural-critical work—indeed, a work of older philosophy—with a final theocentric form. In a memoir of Wittgenstein, Paul Englemann recalled that in contrast to the local positivism, Wittgenstein "passionately believes that all that really matters in human life is precisely what, in his view, we must be silent about." Well. From Vienna and logical positivism to St. John of the Cross and the *via negativa*. Stop talking, Neurath, Carnap, Russell, Ayer!

Wittgenstein himself commented that the logical system of the *Tractatus* outlines the coastline of an island only to get a better view of the boundary of the ocean. The exquisite intellectual beauty of the *Tractatus* lies in the fact that by pushing the logical positivist method to its very limits, the *Tractatus* comes to the outer edges of empiricism —and knows that there is more. We are not surprised to learn that Wittgenstein admired St. Augustine, considered Kierkegaard the greatest nineteenth-century thinker, and sometimes thought about entering a monastery. There are more things in heaven and earth, Carnap, than are dreamt of in your philosophy. The greatest of all the logical positivists was really a rabbi.

In a remarkably analogous way, modern astronomy—an extension of empiricism through instruments — has come to its conceptual edges. We now know that the universe had a *beginning*, an idea so disturbing to some

minds that it was bitterly resisted until the proofs came in. Einstein, for example, held out for the everlastingness of the universe and even made mathematical errors in his desire to demonstrate this. Einstein felt uncomfortable with the alternative, to say the least. But we now know that the universe began about twenty billion years ago with a gigantic explosion, the radiation from which has been measured by scientists at Bell Laboratories and the time span calculated with remarkable precision. The fact of the Big Bang, as it is now familiarly called, has been confirmed by measuring the speed at which stars are moving away from the epicenter of the explosion.

But what was there before the beginning? Here again we reach the limits of empiricism—and again, exquisitely, through a very sophisticated empiricism itself, courtesy of the radiation experts at Bell Laboratories, empiricism, as in Wittgenstein, falls silent. As scientist Robert Jastrow of Dartmouth has put it, the scientists have been laboriously climbing a mountain, and upon reaching the peak and looking over, saw the theologians on the other side, who had been there for centuries. "In the beginning ...."

There is yet another strange instance which pushes us up against the frontiers of empirical knowledge. I speak here, with considerable hesitation, about the so-called Shroud of Turin. I would like to request at this point a momentary suspension of disbelief; that is to say I would like to request an attitude of *real* skepticism. Just what *is* this object?

Recent carbon-dating tests have indicated that the linen cloth dates from the Fourteenth Century, and therefore is not, as many had previously supposed, the burial cloth of Jesus. But the image on the garment is assuredly that of a man who had been crucified. A pollen dating test indicates a First Century origin. The details on the cloth were not available to us until 1898, when the cloth was photographed. The anatomical knowledge indicated in the image was not available in Europe in the Fourteenth

Century. We have no record of crucifixion in Europe after the Fourth Century.

Scientists from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena have performed various operations connected with the Shroud. This represents a remarkable conjunction of the most modern techniques with an ancient mystery. They used computer techniques developed in mapping the topography of Mars to study the image on the Shroud. According to Dr. Donald Lynn, there is no "linear directionality" in the Shroud image, which means that it could not have been painted. Furthermore, the three-dimensional image produced at the laboratory demonstrates that the marks on the cloth correspond to those that would be obtained from a sheet laid over a body.

But how was the image on the Shroud produced? The answer is: we do not know. All kinds of experiments have been carried out without coming close to reproducing the equivalent of the image. And here once again we appear to be standing at the outermost edges of empiricism. It seems more plausible that the Shroud actually was the burial garment of Jesus than that somehow a medieval artist faked it. Genuine skepticism would enjoin a fully open mind concerning this particular object.

There have also been important and here pertinent developments in serious biblical criticism. Such scholarship recently has been issuing in very different conclusions from those of the nineteenth-century scholarship, what Matthew Arnold called the science of Tübingen, and which caused such dismay among the Victorian faithful. Very roughly speaking, serious biblical scholarship during the past 150 years has resembled a parabola. For a long time scholarship issued in conclusions we can associate with Albert Schweitzer and Rudolph Bultmann. No, this scholarship told us, we have little knowledge about the historical Jesus. It may be that he never existed. It may be that a religion swept the eastern part of the Roman empire in the First Century and fabricated a divinity.

In a charming episode, some serious scholars doubted that the town of Nazareth existed in the First Century.

There was no evidence that it existed before the Fourth Century. Was the town of Jesus itself a fiction? In 1955, archaeologists found it, excavating beneath the Church of the Annunciation. In 1961 an inscription was discovered in Caesarea dating from the early Roman period in which the name "Nazareth" is there for anyone to inspect.

This episode is representative. The consensus in recent biblical scholarship is summarized in such eminently fair books as Stephen Neill's *Interpretation of the New Testament: 1891-1961* (Oxford, 1964) and A.E. Harvey's *Jesus and the Constraints of History* (Westminster, 1982). These books, and others, discuss the careful work of biblical scholars in recent years, most of them unknown to the general educated public. This work of analysis has gone forward with a great sense of intellectual responsibility, and much of it is highly technical. It issues, however, in the conclusion that the synoptic gospels are to be taken very seriously as *history*. We may know as much about the life and death of Jesus as we know about the life and death of Cicero.

The habits of mind established over almost half a millennium are very difficult to disturb. To question or even modify settled assumptions is a painful business. Empirical habits of mind have dominated the West at least since Sir Francis Bacon. The prevailing view of reality, even among highly educated people, is often like that of a businessman after a good lunch. The empirical world,the world of the five senses, is all. Yet we have seen that a convergence is coming into being of a very different tendency—a convergence in philosophy, in astronomy, in the on-going investigation of the Shroud, and in modern biblical criticism.

Of course, what lies before us in our own *fin de siecle* most emphatically is not the abandonment of empiricism. Nostradamus and Cagliostro are not welcome here. Before empiricism there was no medicine, no effective diffusion of knowledge, no efficient transportation, only the most arduous communication. Life often approximated Hobbes' famous description of the state of nature: solitary, nasty, poor, brutish, and short. What lies before us, in my

view, is the disciplined cultivation of a radical skepticism, the effort to carry skepticism a final step. Indeed, something of this order happened in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*.

The modern secular and empirical consciousness is not skeptical but selectively skeptical. It has been skeptical about classical philosophy and about Christian claims. It has not often been skeptical about its own presuppositions. Now suppose we were not selectively skeptical but really skeptical, skeptical across the board, entertaining no prior theoretical assumptions about the nature of actuality, no preconceptions about what is possible or thinkable. We would simply clear the intellectual decks, depend upon the evidence, no matter how unsettling. There would be no official truth, no respectable truth.

A very different and much less relativistic landscape would begin to emerge under the sunlight of this comprehensive skepticism. In this way we would appreciate and pursue empiricism, but, moved by the evidence and not by mere wishful thinking, our intellectual net would be cast much wider, and we would find relief from our present sense of utter cultural and intellectual banality.

> In Athens, while Paul was awaiting them, his spirit was exasperated within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. And he would have discussions with Jews and the worshippers in the synagogue and in the market place every day with anyone he happened to meet. And some of the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers encountered him, and some of them said: What might this vagabond be trying to tell us? And others said: He seems to be an announcer of foreign divinities. Because he brought the gospel of Jesus and the resurrection. So they took him in hand and led him to the Areopagus, saying: Can we discover what is this new teaching of which you are telling us? You are bringing something new to our ears ....
>
> Then Paul, standing in the middle of the Areopagus, said: Gentlemen of Athens, I perceive that you are in every way more god-fearing than others; for as I went about and observed your sanctuaries I even found an altar inscribed To the Unknown God.

What you worship without knowing what it is, this is what I proclaim to you. God, who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of Heaven and earth, does not live in hand-built temples, nor, as one who needs anything, is he ministered to by human hands, since he himself gave life and breath and everything else to all ....

When they heard about the resurrection from the dead, some scoffed but some said: We will listen to you again concerning this matter.

So Paul went from their midst; but some men attached themselves to him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite and his wife, who was named Damaris, and some others with them.

— Acts 17-18, trans. Richard Lattimore

The Ten Commandments: An engineering evaluation

BY RAPHAEL G. KAZMANN

Engineering evaluations of projects and plans for projects are nothing new, but they have not been applied to maxims that are considered "religious," such as the Ten Commandments. These have been considered off-limits for such an evaluation: too intangible, a matter of faith rather than an objective reality.

We have been told, all too often, that religion, morals, and morality are purely subjective, subject to change with fashion or with the "Zeitgeist" of society. Engineering evaluation cannot be applied to a purely subjective phenomenon, such as a vision that only one person can see, nor to a fantasy such as those induced by hallucinogenic drugs. If the Ten Commandments can be accepted or rejected on a purely personal basis, if there is no underlying, objective reality behind this collection of injunctions, then an engineering evaluation is futile. However, if an objective reality underlies the Commandments, they are subject to evaluation: What exactly are they designed to do? How well do they achieve the objective? What are they good for, and when?

The writer is well aware that the mere act of "evaluating" the Commandments, both individually and as a system, will create unfriendly responses from some who accept them on faith, as the underpinning of religious beliefs, and will result in scornful remarks by others. Yet since the Commandments have merited the respect and

faith of generations of believers, it may not be too much to ask that judgement be suspended until the entire enterprise has been presented for critical study.

Do moral precepts reflect pervasive objective reality? Before we can answer this question we must examine the motivations that guide human behavior. Moral principles may well be the distillation of human experiences (some might say the experience of all life forms) that have proved beneficial, life enhancing. In short, "What makes people act as they do?" is the basic question that first must be examined.

It is my observation that people act in response to their recognition of values. At any particular moment, they do what is, for them, the most important thing. Their motivations are not always logical, for emotion and instinct play a part in determining their actions. And later analysis usually revels that their actions were not always optimal. No one is perfect; people make mistakes. But for the most part people do the most important thing, as they perceive it.

The role of reason in determining actions was powerfully expressed by Ayn Rand. She wrote extensively on the subject of values, and her writing was both logical and insightful. Her most important belief and assumption was that man is a completely rational animal. In her essay "The Objectivist Ethics," she put it this way:

> *Value* is that which one acts to gain and/or keep. The concept *value* is not a primary; it presupposes an answer to the question of value to *whom* and for *what*? ... Where no alternative exists, no goals and no values are possible ....
>
> There is only one fundamental alternative in the universe: existence or non-existence—and it pertains to a single class of entities: to living organisms. The existence of inanimate matter is unconditional; the existence of life is not: it depends on a specific course of action. Matter is indestructible; it changes its forms, but it cannot cease to exist. It is only a living organism that faces a constant alternative: the issue of life or death. Life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated

action. If an organism fails in that action, it dies; its chemical elements remain, but its life goes out of existence. It is only the concept of *life* that makes the concept of *value* possible. It is only to a living entity that things can be good or evil.

To make this point fully clear, try to imagine an immortal, indestructible robot, an entity which moves and acts, but cannot be affected by anything, which cannot be changed in any respect, which cannot be damaged, injured, or destroyed. Such an entity would not be able to have any values; it would have nothing to gain or to lose; it could not regard anything as *for* or *against* it, as serving or threatening its welfare, as fulfilling or frustrating its interests. It could have no interests or goals ....

An organism's life depends on two factors: the material or fuel which it needs from the outside, from its physical background, and the action of its own body, the action of using that fuel *properly*. What determines what is *proper* in this context? The standard is the organism's life, or: that which is required for the organism's survival.

No choice is open to an organism on this issue: that which is required for its survival is determined by its *nature*, by the kind of entity it *is* ... if an organism fails in the basic functions required by its nature — if an amoeba's protoplasm stops assimilating food or if a man's heart stops beating — the organism dies .... Life can be kept in existence only by a constant process of self-sustaining action. The goal of that action, the ultimate *value* which, to be kept must be gained through its every movement, is the organism's *life*.[1]

Rand's concept of "ultimate value" is subject to testing, because it may be possible to find exceptions that might prove it wrong. Is the ultimate value of any entity its own physical survival? Few among us have not heard or read stories about cats going into burning buildings to rescue their kittens. Robert Ardrey, in African Genesis, retells Eugene Marais' story about the two young baboons who deliberately attacked a leopard that was threatening to destroy their band—and baboons fear leopards far more than any other animal, man included. The baboons, of course, were killed by the leopard, but not before they fatally injured it. And who has not heard of fathers and

mothers willingly sacrificing themselves so that their children might survive? Grandparents have, on occasion, acted in the same way. So when we speak of "ultimate" values, as did Miss Rand, there should be no values that rank higher. We must conclude, based on empirical evidence, that all of her arguments apply to the next-to ultimate value, the life of the individual.

In reality, the ultimate value for each living being is not its own individual life but that of its kind: perpetuation of its gene group in all degrees of kinship, and of its species. We may call this *"biological immortality."* All other values are secondary. It is from the concept of value that a continuum from good (life enhancing) to bad (life terminating) arises. There is, objectively, a difference between good and bad: *it is not a matter of whim or arbitrary choice.*

For an entity to evolve and develop toward its ultimate goal, it must achieve secondary goals as well. For example, life must be sustained, babies must be born, children must be raised. But mankind did not arrive on the earth by itself: we have been accompanied by a myriad of living things from amoebas to elephants. All of these creatures have certain responses, to sustain life, built in. Or, in computer terms, we would call these "hard wired" responses. Most of us would call these responses "instinct," and behaviorists would call this "instinctual behavior."

Men add to instinctual behavior by reasoning and by meditation on the activities and experiences of others. Reason and cogitation enable people to learn from experience, from what might be called "useful deaths." A man eats an unknown root and dies; his associates, thus alerted, avoid this type of root. Our culture has institutionalized this process: after every major accident, and many minor ones, we investigate the circumstances to determine the cause, so that we can warn the survivors against making the same mistakes.

If we were to borrow a word from theology, we might say that when we deliberately or unwittingly ignore the operations of natural law, we commit a "sin." We extend this term by distinguishing two categories of sin: retriev-

able and irretrievable—venial and mortal. A retrievable sin would include blundering off the edge of a three-foot deep trench. We could be injured or severely shaken-up, but would probably survive with temporarily diminished capacity. If we blundered off the edge of a thirty foot high cliff, the damage would probably be irretrievable—mortal sin—and there would be no recovery. The sin consisted of deliberately or unwittingly ignoring the operation of the law of gravity under the circumstances. We did not violate or break the law. We acted so that the operation of the law would damage or kill us.

Manifestly, no single individual or even a group of individuals can possibly recognize all hazards; so society does its best to fill the gap by providing warnings. Many common warnings could be cited: on highways we find signs for deer crossings and railroad crossings; detours are indicated, safe speeds around curves are shown; bottles containing poison are clearly marked with warnings; elaborate signs indicate the danger from power lines and transformers. These warnings are so commonplace that we accept their presence without question as society warns its members of possible "sin." Newton's laws of motion (that enable engineers to compute the safe speed for a motor vehicle to negotiate a curve), the laws of electric currents, the laws of chemistry, nuclear physics, and thermodynamics—in all these, and more, are the sources of man-made warnings and rules. Sometimes legislation has been passed so that people who ignore natural law may be punished by society for ignoring the warnings. Currently, legislation is being passed in the United Stated to punish those drivers caught driving vehicles who have more than a minimal percentage of alcohol in their bloodstreams. They are not being jailed for drinking (although alcohol temporarily interferes with the optimum operation of the body); they are being jailed for their potential violation of Newton's laws of motion, actions which would jeopardize themselves and other members of society.

Violating a man-made law is punishable only after a violator has been caught, tried, and convicted. For example, parking in a no-parking zone is a violation that will be punished only if a policeman sees the violation and issues a citation; a driver who tries to round a curve at 100 miles per hour (a speed in excess of the posted speed limit) when computations based on Newton's laws show that the vehicle will not be able to make the turn and will go off the road if its speed is more than 75 mph, has violated the speed limit and would receive a traffic ticket if he were caught. However, his "violation" of Newton's laws punishes him immediately by causing him to leave the road at a high rate of speed and, possibly, destroying him —all this without the intervention of human hands.

It is clear that the word "violation" is misleading when applied to natural laws, for no one can actually violate a natural law. When used in this way it means the "violator" has ignored the operation of the particular law and placed himself in a life-threatening situation. The "violator" is automatically punished by objective circumstances. If a driver corners too rapidly on a slippery surface, his car may leave the road and he will wind up in a ditch. He did not "violate" a natural law; he operated according to its dictates but without regard for the life-threatening results. Thus the phrase, "violation of natural law." ("sin" in theological terms), will be taken to mean that the individual or the society has acted in such a way that the normal and inevitable operation of natural law has produced, or will produce, deleterious (contra-survival) consequences.

Many people seem to believe that moral principles are primarily religious in origin, are arbitrary and therefore relative—they believe there are no absolutes. One of the best expressions of this attitude is a statement by Professor Henry David Aiken:

> ... modern ethical theory has brought many "enlightened" people to a certain presumption about the nature of morality: unlike the objectively verifiable theories of science, moral judgements and principles are merely expressions and incite-

ments of emotions ...moral experience is something wholly real—but its reality is wholly personal.[2]

I maintain that moral principles are no different from any other set of principles that govern the operations of the natural universe: they were not created by man and they will not be changed by man. Moreover, they are discovered, not devised. Newton did not create the laws of motion; he discovered them. Moses did not create the Commandments; he received them from the same non-human source that enabled Newton to "discover" his laws.

Each generation must be taught the wisdom of its predecessors. Maxims, principles, and wisdom are not the product of a single generation of men. They are the product of bitter experience and heartbreaking cogitation. We cannot know whence come the flashes of insight and wisdom. We are simply lucky if we can recognize them soon and act accordingly. Even so simple an insight as that scurvy would be prevented by adding limes to the diet was not learned by the British Admiralty for 100 years after its discovery, during which time the death rate from scurvy in the British navy was a cause for grave concern. We should not be surprised that insights into human relationships have taken a far greater time to be recognized.

Now, what do the Commandments have to do with this? How can they be evaluated? If we accept that the ultimate purpose of life, as far as unaided reason can determine it, is immortality in the biological sense defined above, we have a yardstick to use for evaluation. Does each Commandment, and the entire assembly of ten, if followed by the members of a society, help or hinder the individual in his quest for immortality? The following discussion is based on this yardstick.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT is the most important: *There is only one God.* There is, consequently, only one source of order, and the corollary is that the universe is orderly. We must believe that a single order governs the operation of all things, be they galaxies, microbes, or sub-

atomic particles; be it the rotation of planets, the progress of seasons, the mating call of the loon, or the organization of societies, whether of insects, animals, or man. There is no way that this can be demonstrated; it is a matter of faith. And if there is only one order, there can be no paradoxes or anomalies. Paradoxes and anomalies are the product of human misinterpretation or misapprehension, or lack of observation and understanding.

The accepted orderliness of the universe is the basis for modern science and engineering. We operate on the confident expectation that if we repeat a certain procedure the same results will ensue. If they are not found, then we have not taken all of the outside influences into account. For example, we turn on a faucet and water gushes forth. We do this time and again, and we are never disappointed. If, however, we turn the faucet and no water comes out, or there is only a trickle instead of the stream that we expected, we investigate the system to find out what has happened: a pipe break, possibly, an obstruction in the pipe, a power failure — something unforeseen has occurred, because the universe is orderly, and water, once produced by the system, should be available when the faucet is turned unless something has happened.

Scientists and engineers collect data and create theories as to the relationships between observations, assuming that some underlying order exists and that with enough work and imagination, possibly they can determine what it is. Sometimes, even though we do not understand a process, we have a procedure which produces the desired results. For example, engineers have known about cement since the days of Rome but they still have not devised a comprehensive theory of how it works: to determine the characteristics of concrete, sample batches of mixtures of cement and aggregate are made and tested before the specifications for concrete are set forth for a project. This is an "empirical" procedure, but it works reliably, for there is an order in the universe that we can rely on, even if we do not know exactly what it is.

Were there more than one source of order, and more than one system governing interrelationships, a single set of circumstances would not necessarily be repeatable as matters oscillated between one order and the other. Experiments might have two or three or even four equally probable outcomes, and each repetition would yield a different answer. When such an outcome occurs (as it infrequently does), we know that there is some influence that is not been taken into account, and we search for it. We believe that the universe is an orderly one and that there is only one order. If our observations and experiments show disorderly results, either our procedures or understanding are at fault, and we must work harder.

Our belief in the orderliness of the universe is illustrated by the reliance of engineers and scientists on statistical methods, when cause and effect are not readily associated. Absent a clear-cut relationship, people resort to the statistics of probability and determine whether the outcome was due to chance and what the chances of the observation being random are. These are reported as "confidence limits;" for example, "the polling results are accurate to within 3 percent, plus or minus."[3] We are too familiar with the weather reports that say there is a 20 percent chance of rain during the next 24 hours, and we are never exactly sure how this is to be interpreted.

Whereas in theory it might be possible to predict the life span of a single individual (if his genetic make-up and such influences as food intake, life style, working habits, exposure to risk etc. throughout his lifetime could be known), this task is clearly beyond our abilities. Instead we study the life experiences of a multitude of individuals, try to determine the important parameters, and lump the results together, possibly by age groups. Then organizations that we know as "insurance companies" are able to predict that a person of a certain age, sex, and life-style (drinking, sexual practice, smoking, etc.) will live to a specific age. This is the basis for life insurance, and the same analysis applies to other forms of insurance. The universe may be orderly, although it is not within our

power to know the details. On the aggregate, however, we often can be confident in our predictions.

In the course of human history there have been many societies that believed in multiple sources of order. In ancient Persia there were two sources; the God of Light and the God of Darkness. Depending on which one was dominant at the time of the endeavor, the outcome might be good and repeatable, or good and unrepeatable due to the action of the other God. The universe was not built to a single order and, as a result, no firm theoretical picture could be constructed, and no scientific observations beyond recorded empirical experience which might not be repeatable were possible.

So belief in the existence of one God, a single Creator, is an essential tenet of faith in what we term "Western" civilization. Order is not possible without a Creator any more than an electronic watch is possible without a maker of electronic watches. The likelihood of the existence of a Creator is expressed to some small extent when the complexity of the human genome is compared to the complexity of an electronic watch—and we know that a human being created the watch, an elementary structure as compared to the genome. The concept of "random" is an artifact, a product of human limitations; for the universe is orderly.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT, *Don't make physical representations (idols) and place your trust in them,* is an injunction that is almost incomprehensible to the thinkers of modern society. Many scientists claim that they don't believe in God at all (although they act as though the universe were an orderly one with only one order pervading it); so, if they don't believe in a Creator, as night follows day, they can't possibly believe in idols, and they think that the injunction has no bearing on them.

Lack of historical perspective keeps most people from realizing that, in Biblical times, the priesthood included all members of what we term the learned professions: medical doctors, engineers, lawyers, judges and the sub-

specialties of each. Now that there is no longer an official priesthood, only clergymen of one faith or another, we fail to comprehend the thrust and scope of this Commandment.

Let's put the injunction in terms that this generation can understand: don't confuse human constructs (physical, mathematical, and philosophical models) with the actual orderliness of the universe and act as though the model would respond as the universe does. Time and time again, the public is confronted with economic models, Club of Rome predictions, "greenhouse" scenarios, models of climate, acid rain, wind-tunnel models, big-bang theories, nuclear winter scenarios, and catastrophes due to an overabundance of methane, sulfur, ozone, fluorocarbons, etc. in the atmosphere because of human activities. Now and then, to some unknown extent, these models have some validity. But to put faith in these models and to commit huge sums of money—money extracted from the public by taxation, under threat of fine and imprisonment—is the exact modern equivalent of the Biblical warning against abandoning God and worshipping graven images and supporting the priesthood of these images.

It is pertinent here to point out that there is no single time scale for the consequences of deleterious actions. The more specialized a model is, the greater the opportunity for unforeseen circumstances to affect the real-world results, and the shorter is the time scale. If you have a model that indicates that small concentrations of fluoride are beneficial (and the definition of "small" is not clearly specified for all circumstances) and you ingest and amount that is not "small," if it is large enough it is likely to be fatal within hours; a slightly smaller amount might prove fatal in days or months; an even smaller amount might prove fatal in years or decades. The rate of response varies here with the extent of the "sin" (as we have defined it). Another example: if a society believes in mercantilism and erects all sorts of barriers against imports to preserve a "positive" balance of trade, painful experience has shown that the result will be the increasing impoverish-

ment of the society (or country) that is being "protected," the increasing inefficiency of its producers, and a lowering of the standard of living of the citizens. But the time period required for all of these effects to be fully felt is measured in years rather than days or months.

Here is an example from the physical world that combines engineering, construction, and politics: the Federal navigation and flood control programs. The purpose of the first was to facilitate navigation and commerce; the purpose of the second was ostensibly to protect commerce from the impact of floods, such as the MIssissippi River flood of 1927. The channelization and dredging of rivers was undertaken to facilitate the movement of freight on the rivers. Flood control was believed to be obtainable (a conceptual model) by containing much of the run-off in large, up-stream reservoirs and by operating these in conjunction with an extensive system of large levees on the Mississippi River. The levees would prevent overflows, and the reservoirs would reduce the flood peaks, making the levees even more effective. The system was built, and the principal components are reservoirs on the Tennessee River and its tributaries (TVA) and the reservoirs on the Missouri River. The levee system was built to contain a flood estimated to be larger than any shown in the records. The system of levees was completed first, and the last major dam on the Missouri River was completed in 1954. The question is, "In what ways were the physical and mathematical models (the graven images) inadequate?"

For one thing although they allowed for the accumulation of silt in the reservoirs for at least 100 years before the volume reduction would affect the storage volume assigned to store flood waters, the model did not include the impact of releasing sediment-free water on the river banks of the alluvial Missouri and Mississippi River. The need for bank stabilization has been a major, unwanted, side-effect of the construction program, costing far more than the original levee system originally did (even correcting the cost-figures for inflation); and it, together with annual dredging, is a continuing cost. Another side-effect has

been the loss of marshes and wetlands in Louisiana. The annual overflows of the sediment-bearing Mississippi have been eliminated by the levee system. Most of the sediment that formerly came down the river is now being stored in the flood control reservoirs. So, as the geological strata underlying the present marshes compact, the land surface subsides, and the marshes vanish beneath the salt waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

In this case as in countless others, politicians have followed the advice of one or another model-making priesthood and have not acted cautiously, in accord with the known laws of the universe and the interests of those that they were supposed to serve. When things turn out deleteriously, then, just as their predecessors did in the ancient past, the politicians blame the priesthood and find a new model to adopt while they promise that this new god will produce the desired results. But this is not an acceptable way for politicians to excuse their actions: responsibility accompanies authority. It is not what you think, what you intend, or what the arguments are—it is what you do that counts. The laws of the Universe operate with complete impartiality and complete objectivity on every level. The use of inadequate (false) models is self-correcting when public funds are not involved. But politicians are rarely held accountable for disastrous errors.

Another inadequate model that has been imposed on the United States with terrible effect is the mandatory minimum wage. The theory was that wages and productivity have no overriding relationship, that what was needed was a minimum wage that would yield enough money to support a poor workingman and his family, and that this could be imposed throughout the economy and improve everyone's economic condition. Let us ignore the arguments against this viewpoint and confine ourselves to the real world. The real effect of the minimum wage has been to deprive the least capable workers (the young and inexperienced or otherwise handicapped) from finding employment. As the minimum wage has been increased, the percentage of unemployed youth, both black and

white, has increased. Only after a period of inflation, with an effective decrease in the minimum wage, when the productivity of unskilled labor has exceeded the cost of putting it to work, do the rates of unemployment go down. The social cost, unrecognized by the model, is great: large numbers of young people never have the opportunity to become self-supporting, productive citizens. These young people, forcibly deprived of their right to enter into productive employment at an entry level, never develop the self-esteem that accompanies self-sustaining labor. They become the perpetrators of crimes, peddling and ingesting drugs, and manifest all sorts of anti-social behavior. Families that might have been formed are replaced by unstable, socially demoralized groups, dependent on the dole.

The consequences of implementing the recommendations of an all-encompassing model, violating the injunction against making and believing in idols, are not confined to the guilty generation. The effects will be felt by two, three, or even a greater number of generations. Ultimately, the impact of the decision will be so obviously life-threatening that the model will be abandoned, no matter what the cost. The most spectacular example is the progressive real-world deterioration of the societies that were "constructed" by applying the Marxist model that we call "socialism" or "communism" — a textbook example of political entities adopting a social mode not in accord with universal laws, particularly those that we call the Commandments. We will return to this example later in the essay.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT, *Do Not Take The Name of The Lord In Vain*, is trivially interpreted as not to curse, as in saying "goddamit." But the prohibition of blasphemy has wider meaning. Blasphemy is promulgating the concept that the only order in the universe is man-made. The result of promulgating this idea—a transgression that is really an attack on the foundations of immortal society—is a social disaster. In Russia the newly founded Soviet

Union initiated a rampage of murder and destruction that annihilated as many as 70 million people (they called it "liquidating" class enemies). This was unequaled until a different variety of socialism, "national socialism," took over in Germany, and duplicated, in its own way, the systematic murder of tens of millions of people. And even this, in sheer numbers, pales by comparison with the Chinese Communists under Mao and his successors who, in their pursuit of ideology, destroyed possibly more than 100 million innocent people. From the standpoint of percentage of the population murdered, it is hard to decide whether the Khmer Rouge or the Ethiopian Communists reduced their country's population more.

This blasphemy, in effect, is the promulgation of the idea that the Universe does not exist as an objective reality, so that the thrust of any dream or theory, if applied hard enough and long enough, will prevail. The rebuilding of a city that is the focus of repeated earthquakes is a form of blasphemy. And the establishment of a social order that deliberately violates the hard-won precepts of history is another.

The Universe cannot be considered either benign or malignant; it simply exists. Some of us die as we test the limits of the possible, much like test pilots who test new airplane designs. In the process we find that we have violated some previously unrecognized natural or social law. We learn from useful deaths: we have institutionalized this learning process in the case of, for example, airplane accidents. Organizations exist to investigate the causes and to report on the errors so that these errors will not be repeated. It is just becoming known that in the Soviet Union crashes and their causes have been covered up, and this has led to additional crashes that could have been avoided. Blasphemy, in this instance, is to assert that no transgression of law occurred.

It is also blasphemy to believe that we can by-pass this risk-taking process, that a model can be devised that will enable us to do new things without paying the price in lives. This action violates both the Second and Third Com-

mandments. An illustration: the Food and Drug Administration is charged with testing new drugs and certifying them to be both safe and effective. So an elaborate procedure has been established for testing new drugs with the use of, first, animals, and later, groups of people. The time between the discovery of a promising new drug and its introduction commercially is thus lengthened to almost ten years. So if the drug proves to be effective, then all of those persons who might have been helped, or whose lives could have been saved during that decade, have died in vain; and this is a direct result of the models and the procedures. This death toll must be compared to the lives that might have been lost had the drug gone directly from the animal tests into the commercial market, possibly eight or nine years sooner. And what if, as so often happens, a drug that is on the market and approved turns out to have side-effects that are serious and negative? With FDA approval it is likely that many more people will have utilized the drug than would have used it had it been released earlier with a strong warning and the need to sign a binding waiver.

As we expand the limits of our living space, whether in fighting disease and disability or exploring the moon, there will be deaths. The problem is to minimize the cost in human life, and this can only be done by studying the outcomes of various endeavors and publicizing those outcomes. It is not conceivable that the expansion will be cost-free and hazard-free, no matter what models we espouse. Risk is a part of living. Even when we do nothing out of the ordinary, some risk remains—there is always the world of microscopic organisms that preys upon us, and they have taken their toll.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT, *Observe the Sabbath*, is the formal recognition that human beings are not machines and may not be treated as if they were. Bitter experience has taught us that a weekly day of rest is essential to restore strength and to strengthen the bonds of family. Many political systems, particularly those that sys-

tematically violate other precepts, have worked people to death by ignoring this injunction. The time for rest and physical renewal is also available for contemplation, for spiritual renewal, for creating binding ties with the younger members of the family, and for improving the understanding of the order of the universe.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT, *Honor Your Mother and Father*, is one that is usually not understood. It is treated as a sentiment or a curiosity. We note that it does not say "Love your mother and father," "Support your mother and father," or "Obey your mother and father." The verb is "honor". Since the Commandments are not trivial, and have survived four millennia of turbulent history, this one must have some critical, real world, significance. And, of course, it does.

Each human being comes into the world defenseless. Someone else—or something—must defend the child's life and interests until it is old enough and wise enough to act independently. Where the Fifth Commandment is obeyed, this defender is the family. A child "belongs" to its father and mother, not to the state or the commune; and as the child begins to wonder about right and wrong, truth and falsehood, the parents are the primary channel of information to it.

To see what happens where this Commandment is disregarded, we have only to look at the recent history of socialist and communist-ruled areas. One of the initial measures that the regime takes is to try to destroy the family, because it—the totalitarian regime—wants to be the "owner" of the rising generation and wants to monopolize the channeling of information to it. A major portion of the attack is to set the children against the parents. This is done by encouraging children to report on the words and activities of their parents—to denounce them to the authorities. Thus, words said in the privacy of the family, when the elders oppose the machinations of the authorities, are made known to these same authorities, and the family may be (and in many instances has been) physically

destroyed. The children have dishonored the parents, and the results have been evil, contra survival, against achieving the ultimate goal of individual or biological immortality.

Disregard of this Commandment is also found in Western societies, where parents are supplanted by "child-care professionals," or where children are encouraged to take their primary behavioral cues from the mass media of entertainment. The result is not only a rising tide of adolescent "rebellion," drug abuse, and juvenile crime, but also a collapsing birth-rate. For when people know that they will be "dishonored" as parents, they have less incentive to produce children. Here, too, the effect is contra survival.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT, *Do Not Murder*, is one that has been widely misinterpreted as meaning "Don't kill". There is, however, an important and fundamental difference between killing and murder. Murder is the premeditated killing of a member of your society who has done nothing wrong, who is innocent. It is a specialized sub-set of the verb "kill". We recognize the difference between "manslaughter" and "murder," where the difference is in the intent of the action that caused the death. We punish one differently from the other. The word "murder" does not apply to the actions of a soldier in battle, nor to the deaths of food-animals, nor to the catching and killing of fish, nor to a multitude of other activities that result in the death of a living organism, be it animal, insect, or vegetable. "Murder" is a word that applies to a purely social action, one whose effect is to destroy the cohesion of society, one that applies equally to the actions of individuals, either as single individuals or in concert with others, i.e., groups or governments.

Murder can never be a socially accepted activity. It is impossible to imagine a stable society where murder is not punished when the murderer can be identified. If such a society should be established, no one would be safe in his life, livelihood, home or possessions. If one man could

appropriate the possessions of another by murdering him without fear of punishment or retribution, a pervasive anxiety would be created in each member of society, concealment of assets would be common, and cooperation and trust would be minimal. Such a society would have legally decriminalized crime. This, of course, would not stop the natural reaction of those related to the murdered person, which would be to eliminate this menace to their existence and biological immortality. Blood feuds would be common. The environment would be extremely unfavorable for establishing families and bringing up children. Family formation would be discouraged, and the individual's quest for immortality would be frustrated. We might expect the divorce rate (the rate of break-up of families) to increase, the suicide rate to increase, and the incidence of all sorts of crime to increase as compared to the rates found in a normal society that punishes murder. The current controversy about the justice of capital punishment reflects an attempt to downgrade the seriousness of murder.

But the purposeful ending of the lives of innocent people is not confined to actions by individuals. We have many examples of categories of innocent persons deemed unfit to live by those possessing governmental power. We need go no further than Stalin's murder of Ukrainian farmers in the early 1930s, the murder of Jews by Hitler, the murder of Ethiopian peasants by the communist rulers of Ethiopia throughout the 1980s, the murder of a third of the people of Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge to demonstrate that murder is a concept that goes beyond one man shooting another in order to benefit from his death. Murder through the use of state power to establish an ideology (idolatry) has been widespread and has claimed more victims than the private exercise of violence by individuals.

A remarkable result of government-sponsored murder is to be found in the behavior of the Ukrainians during World War II. When the German armies invaded, they found a population that welcomed them as liberators—

including the Jews! It was not until the SS took over the local governments that the people found that they had traded one devil for another. But the fact remains that, initially, against all feelings of territoriality, the citizens hated their government to the point of welcoming invaders. Such activity has few, if any, historical precedents. Admittedly the communist regime had violated a number of other strictures that preserve a society, so the actions of the population cannot be attributed solely to the violation of this single Commandment. But it is difficult to separate the results of violations of the other Commandments from those produced by violating this one — the Commandments work as a group, much like vitamins do in the human body.

There is a specialized form of murder that goes under the name of "abortion". Once human life has been created, innocent life, it is a part of society and must be protected. Unborn children can inherit property, although the property is placed in trust for them. The deliberate killing of an unborn child must be classed as murder. Its relationship with its mother is not analogous to the mother's relationship with a veriform appendix, a wart on her face, or a cancer in her colon. The latter three are actual parts of the mother's body; the unborn child is a separate human being, temporarily drawing on the mother for sustenance and care. For example, drugs ingested during pregnancy by the mother (including aspirin) can damage the partly formed child, and widespread publicity campaigns have been undertaken to make this information known to pregnant women. Just as society cannot tolerate the murder of a child by its mother, it cannot long tolerate the murder of unborn children for the convenience of the mother. There are rare instances when a choice must be made between saving a mother or the child, but these must be decided on the individual circumstances; no generalizations can be universally applicable. The injunction against murder is one that may not be violated without moral peril to the individuals and the society. Any society that does not enforce this injunction reduces its viability, and the

viability of its members, and lessens their chances of personal or biological immortality.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT, *Do Not Commit Adultery*, is aimed at protecting the family, the immortality of the parents, and the structure of society. It has very little to do with sex, per se. It is the side-effects that accompany the act: the jealousy, hate, anger, the harm to the children, and the destruction of the family unit that are the true target of this injunction. Although divorce, the socially accepted method of breaking up a family unit, is possible, the injunction implies that society will not permit a marriage to break up for trivial reasons. It is not sexual activity that is the prohibited conduct, it is such activity outside the bounds of the family. Such a family may not be monogamous [although there are good reasons why monogamy is the prevailing mode of family formation], but the family unit must be protected from break-up because of sexual activity with outsiders. This is a matter of self-discipline to be reinforced by custom and law.

What are the consequences to the society that does not penalize adultery and makes divorce easy and otherwise discourages the formation and nurture of families? We can expect that the dissolution of marriages will proceed at an ever increasing rate. The more easily divorce can be obtained, the more trivial will be the reasons for the breaking up of marriages and the greater the number of divorces. We can expect that social discipline among the young who are reared by a single parent will be weaker that those reared by two parents and that an increasing incidence of crime, ingestion of alcohol and drugs, promiscuity and venereal disease will occur. Simultaneously the role-model of the working male will be lacking and the intensive physical, moral, and financial efforts that must be made by parents to educate and acculturate the child will be lacking or minimal. The result must be an adult population which, with each successive generation, will manifest a decreasing ability to master the skills needed by the society for productive work.

The injunction against adultery is a vital one: when one abides by it, and when society does its best to enforce it, the family is strengthened and the drive to achieve each individual's ultimate objective, immortality, is facilitated. Even though it may seem, to certain individuals, that their interest is best served by liaisons with married men or women, their objectively real, long-term goals will not be attained. For an hour of physical rapture they sacrifice the more important objective. The structure of the family must be preserved if a society is to survive.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT, *Do Not Steal*, applies to individuals and groups of individuals, including governments. Stealing, in its broadest sense, is the taking of property or labor without the return of service or other compensation.

There is general confusion about stealing and its justification, epitomized by the legend of Robin Hood, who stole from the rich to give to the poor. The charitable use of the proceeds from the theft, it is implied, justify the theft. But we must note that the injunction says nothing about the use of the proceeds, no more than Newton's law of gravity discusses the operation of hot air balloons. The use of the proceeds from theft has no bearing on the effect of stealing on the health and survival of the family and the society—and it is in this area that the law operates. To put it in the simplest possible terms: if the Mafia decides to use a part of its take for the support of nursing homes, does this negate the injunction against stealing? No, because the effects on society of the Mafia's violent actions remain just the same.

Can we really visualize a society that permits theft? If one person could steal from another, with the blessing of society, the accumulation of property could not occur: if anyone had a surplus, it would be fair game for anyone who wanted it. A family could not accumulate material and money for use during times of sickness, or for use to achieve some long-term objective. Suppose someone wanted to have an orchard and saved enough money to

plant it and cultivate it for the three to five years that are needed before the harvesting can begin. Those savings would be fair game for any thief. In the absence of social disapproval and action against thieves, there is a one hundred percent certainty that no orchard would ever be planted. Theft, as an accepted way of life, translates directly into social poverty.

Theft is not always easy to recognize, especially when it involves fraud practiced by authority figures rather than violence practiced by thugs. A physician, for example, is an authority figure; and for this very reason, when he begins to offer treatments which he knows (or ought to know) to be valueless, his patients still believe they are getting an expert service in return for the fees they pay him. But they are deceived; the service has become a fraud, and so the fees have become theft—money taken without return of service. The patients do consent to pay, of course, but their consent doesn't expunge the moral evil of the situation, because it was obtained under false pretenses. If the patients knew what the physician knows, their consent would not be given.

The situation is analogous when the authority figures are politicians, the payments are taxes, the consent is "the consent of the governed," and the fraud consists in the fact that the tax-supported programs which the politicians advocate are bound to be failures. There is a line of distinction, of course, between fraud and mere political folly; but in proportion as the programs are known (or ought to be known) to be flawed, the line has been crossed.

One of the earliest entitlement programs was the tax-support of public education. Let us look at this example carefully.

Before the initiative of tax-supported education, each family was solely responsible for educating its children. In addition there were people with property and funds who were philanthropic and would help poor but worthy students obtain an education. An ambitious youngster might take odd jobs to support himself while gaining an education. The parents were interested in the progress of the

children and sacrificed greatly to finance their education. The literature is full of instances of seamstresses or washerwomen attending graduation of a child from high school or college. Those who paid the teachers had a say in what was being taught. Lack of satisfying progress by the child would result in his having to go to work at a relatively early age.[4]

Upon this social structure, the impact of compulsory, publicly funded education has not been benign. Teachers have organized politically through the National Education Association and similar organizations to increase taxes to "improve" education (but most of the funds are spent on salaries). These organizations have tried to arrogate to themselves the power to determine curricula and standards and to remove the educational content from the control of the parents. Moreover, serious differences have arisen between the NEA and parents as to the method of teaching, the content of what is being taught, and the promulgation of what might be termed "moral" values in the schools.

This is a clear case where a tax increase directly benefits those who are clamoring for the increase, with the false claim that the education of the children will be improved. The "consent of the governed" is thus fraudulently gained. The alleged benefit (service) in return for which the taxes are paid is illusory. The proof? After more than 100 years of compulsory elementary and secondary education, many newspapers are now undertaking campaigns to teach people how to read!

Another negative impact of publicly-funded education is the fight over prayer in the schools. This has given rise to bitter debates. The teaching of moral principles has been opposed by the NEA as imposing "subjective" values whereas education is supposed to be morally neutral (these people do not believe in the existence of an orderly universe, with objective laws that describe the limits of social behavior if a society is to endure). Parents have objected and have gone to court, or organized demonstrations, in protest.

The issue of "integration" has been socially divisive. It is one thing to impose a regulation that people be treated (or educated) without regard to race, creed, sex, or ethnic background. It is quite another to force students into distant classrooms to meet population ratio standards imposed by some idolatrous social theory.

It is of interest to note that these divisive controversies are not to be found in the system of privately supported schools. When a parent finds that the offerings or discipline of a school are not to his liking, he can generally find another school that comes closer to meeting his goals, thus making the adjustment without public controversy. The intensity of the desire for the quality education of children is shown by the fact that private schools in the United States even now educate from 10 to 15 percent of the children between the ages of 5 and 19, despite the fact that the parents of these children are forced to contribute to the operation of the system of publicly funded schools. Historical evidence indicates that in the absence of tax-supported education and other "entitlements," taxes would be low enough so that parents would have the resources to educate their children in private schools. Moreover, private philanthropy can be relied upon to aid in the education of capable children whose parents cannot bear the entire burden (for example, families with several children).

If a comprehensive economic analysis were to be made, the cost of litigation and controversy, the costs to families who have moved to another school district in order to avoid unsatisfactory educational facilities (and middle-class blacks move as often as middle-class whites), the increased costs of educating children under undisciplined conditions, the increased cost to the economy due to the generally deteriorating educational background of high school graduates (which means increased expenditures by employers on education which should have been accomplished in school), and the costs of work stoppages by unionized teachers—all of these hidden costs of public schooling would have to be added to the familiar per-

pupil tax costs; and if all of these were balanced against the tuition costs of private schools, it might be very surprising which one turned out to be the bargain.

One thing ought to be made clear: the transgressing of any Commandment may result in an immediate and temporary benefit to the transgressor. And the evil effects may not become apparent for many years, if not decades. It required almost 150 years from the earliest tax-supported education to result in widespread weakening of the social structure due to divisive controversy and inferior educational performance (not to mention discipline problems and the "dumbing down" of books and curriculum). There will be an enormous cost to society when the current system is replaced, as it most assuredly will be within the next half century. The system is clearly threatening the individual's efforts for immortality by, for example, weakening the ability of the upcoming generation to use the achievements of their predecessors as a foundation for future progress or growth. The system will be changed. Either it will be changed voluntarily as a result of its malfunctioning, or it will be changed involuntarily when it is reconstructed after a general social breakdown.

The results of society's ignoring the injunction against stealing, on the ground that the taking of funds by taxation from one person for use by another been made "legal" by a vote of the people, have been shown to be deleterious in other cases as well. Consider the social security-medicare/medicaid system. Here money is extracted by force from the young people to give to the older ones and to pay their medical expenses when age takes its toll. Even someone making as little as $1000 a year must pay about $75 a year (and his employer pays an identical amount, raising the cost of labor). This is a total of $150 per year in wages out of a total of $1075 that the employee would otherwise receive. The tax is raised almost annually and the maximum amount taxed is also subject to annual raise, by the will of the Congress of the United States.

The result of this exaction, which is now greater for most people than the federal income tax, is that newly

married people who are trying to raise children and support a family are, in effect, paying about 15 percent of their income to support people who are not only older, but often wealthier and healthier that they are. Already there are rumblings of discontent by the younger generation, who feel unjustly treated by the government. Family requirements come second to the tax for the benefit of the retirees and the ill who are funded by the various taxes. This sacrifices the children for the benefit of their grandparents —something that cannot endure if the society is to operate in the long run. Children must come first in the family, not the support of older people who are usually strangers. This is a divisive issue: direct payments to an identifiable age-group directly or indirectly by all of the members of the younger age group. The political repercussions of the social security system and its siblings are now beginning to be felt. And no matter what the final result, one generation has been set against another, weakening the internal ties of the nation.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT, *Don't Lie*, is an absolute necessity for a viable society. It is considered absolutely critical even by the practitioners of modern science who profess to be atheists or agnostics. Deliberate falsehood and misrepresentation, whether of observed data or the deductions therefrom, are not tolerated by organized science, and severe sanction can result to the person shown to have misrepresented the data or the results of his work.

The essence is this: no man can observe everything or know and understand everything. Each person must rely on the experiences and observations of others in order to make beneficial decisions. Society can survive an occasional, inadvertent misrepresentation. However, if the information is deliberately distorted, the decisions that rely on the correctness of the information will be wrong, and unnecessary harm will result. An example: during 1942 and 1943, the Japanese armies in the Burma theatre advanced at first but then began to be driven back. The

officers in the field did not want to lose face by admitting defeat, and so they transmitted reports to their superiors that were incorrect. These superiors, in turn, relying on the information, issued orders for offensives and coordinated troop dispositions. Since their information did not coincide with the realities, their plans were frustrated, and the retreats became disasters rather than set-backs. It is true that the Japanese forces might have been defeated anyway, but false reports that emanated from the field frustrated the best efforts of the general staff and accelerated the debacle.

In civil life, lying under oath is severely punished; perjury is not a trivial civil offense. The reliability of a witness is a key point for an opposing counsel; if the testimony of an expert witness can be impugned, even on a trivial, peripheral matter, the weight of the testimony is reduced. This applies even to an unwitting misrepresentation, as when a witness uses the observations of persons he relies on, and these later prove to be false.

It is difficult, under many circumstances, to determine the facts of a matter. Two cars collide, and the party who caused the accident may not even know that he was at fault, much less the outside observers. Experience has shown that a society can withstand inadvertent misrepresentations. In fact systematic checking of facts is routine, and even though some misrepresentations may still slip through, there is no threat to society; people make mistakes, and these are social losses that are expected, though unwelcome.

Not so is the deliberate lying by individuals, including writers and journalists, politicians and government officials. Even where the consequences of lies are limited to the individual that has been lied to (for example, lying by TV repairmen, auto mechanics, plastic surgeons, or photographers), the results are misallocations of resources, and the victim has been needlessly damaged.

Sometimes prominent journalists or writers deliberately lie by misrepresenting what they are reporting, and these misrepresentations have consequences on public

policy. For example, Walter Duranty of the *New York Times* knew about the famine in the Ukraine (caused by Stalin) in 1931-33, but reported that all was well. This had a vast influence on American policy, in favor of the murderous Soviet regime. There were similar misrepresentations by Herbert Matthews of the *New York Times*, who claimed that Castro was not a communist when, of course, he was, even before his conquest of Cuba. This misreporting influenced public opinion in Castro's favor, and a substantial segment of the media has continued in this vein to the detriment of the United States. There are a number of other examples including the misinterpretation by the reporters of the outcome of the Viet Cong's Tet offensive (for example, Walter Cronkite). The barrage of misinterpretation caused the stance of the United States vis-a-vis the communists to change for the worse. It gave the North Vietnamese communists a psychological victory in the Congress and demoralized President Johnson and his "Whiz Kids," who were micro-managing the war from the safety of their offices in Washington. Millions of people have died as a result of these and similar falsehoods, and the impact on the U.S. economy and on the national psyche is still being felt. Ask the boat people.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT, *Don't Be Envious*, strengthens a society that decries envy. Envy is defined as the painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another, joined with a desire to possess the same advantage. The original statement of the Commandment says, "You must not be envious of your neighbor's house, or want to sleep with his wife, or want to own his slaves, oxen, donkeys, or anything else that he has."

Envy is corrosive to the relationship between people. For in a society where men acquire wealth by the performance of service or some other way that does not violate the fundamental injunctions of a viable society, envy is the precursor of theft. And, of course, the reference to sex is a reinforcement of the Commandment against adultery. If

there is no envy in this regard, the Commandment is obeyed; the family and the society are preserved.

Much of the strife in modern society results from a violation of this maxim. Envy results in special discriminatory taxes on successful people—the "progressive" income tax is just one of a number of similar legislative initiatives based on envy. For what sane society would penalize its most productive members for being productive? A textbook example of how high tax rates, especially on high incomes, is counterproductive is found in the increase in production, throughout the world, that ensued when the tax rates were reduced following President Reagan's initiative.

The preceding discussion is a bare-bones outline of the objective reality of moral principles together with illustrative examples. Enough has been said, however, to illustrate the importance of the natural laws that govern a society whose aspiration it is to continue into the indefinite future.

Considered as an operating system, the injunctions that we term the Commandments form a robust system in which one reinforces the other. Only the First Commandment requires an act of faith. There is no way to demonstrate that the universe is orderly, and there is only a single orderliness. This axiom cannot be proven or falsified; it must be believed and acted upon. This is the article of faith that underlies modern science and technology, and it means that when apparent contradictions are found, we must have faith that it is our lack of understanding and lack of knowledge that has produced the anomaly. Anomalies must be interpreted as meaning, "We don't understand and must investigate further." There are implications here for many other, less technical areas of life, such as law or economics. There can be no anomalies between the findings of one or the other of these disciplines. When the law says do one thing and the economics say to do something else, there is room for more study, and action should be postponed.

Some of the Commandments can be forced by legislation but, in the long run, they are all self-enforcing on a society that survives. The Commandments dealing with a periodic day of rest, stealing, lying, adultery, and murder can be supported by formal legislation penalizing violators who are caught. Enforcement of the Commandments dealing with the creation of models (as a substitute for the real world), blasphemy, the honoring of parents, and the injunction against envy depend on the social disapproval of the violators of these injunctions. There is here the implication that the educational system will teach these basic axioms to each new generation in turn. Value-free education is a contradiction in terms. There can be no such thing as "value free" education; the fundamental rules governing long-term social behavior as epitomized in the Commandments must be taught to the younger generation even as mathematics must be taught, or habits of hygiene.

You can ask yourself the question, "Would you rather bring up your children in a society where all of the Commandments were obeyed or in one where none of the Commandments were obeyed? Or, would the children be nurtured better if some Commandments were obeyed and others were routinely violated — and, if so, which ones would go into which category?"

It should be emphasized that the valuation contained in this is essay is not calculated to be a comprehensive statement of what we term *moral principles*. It is a limited evaluation of some fundamental axioms, an attempt to set forth a goal and to try to determine whether these injunctions, if followed, aid an individual in achieving his goal of immortality, biological to some, spiritual to others. The question of spiritual immortality is a matter of belief; biological immortality is palpable. That the injunctions apply to the latter can be tested in the same way that any theory can be tested. That they apply to the former must be taken on faith.

The First Commandment has been discussed briefly, since it is a matter of acceptance and not subject to testing.

The remainder of this evaluation is confined to the other nine Commandments.

Generally, the Commandments are crafted to preserve the immortality of the individuals of the society that operates within them. This means that they protect the individual, the family, and the society. They benefit those who conduct themselves within the framework in the same manner that a person is rewarded by considering the law of gravity before he steps off an embankment, or the laws of electricity before touching a high tension wire—a person avoids destruction, either immediately or a little later. The main difference between observing the law of gravity and a Commandment is found in the time interval between the "violation" and its consequences to the "violator"

The interval between cause and effect is not a constant. For example, ingesting a small cyanide pill can result in immediate death. Ingesting a large number of sleeping pills results in death after a few hours. Ingesting small amounts of arsenic over a period of time results in death after months or years (Napoleon on St. Helena). Ingesting trace amounts of lead over a period of years results in debility and finally in death. The drug addict whose use of dirty needles made him a victim of AIDS got the disease immediately, but the end result was delayed by several years. The point to be made is that in the real world there is a significant time interval between a violation of natural law and its effect on the individual. It should not surprise anyone that the same chronological interval between cause and effect is to be found with respect to the Commandments. In fact, this is recognized by the phrase, "The sins of the fathers will be visited on the children, the grandchildren, and the great grandchildren" (Exodus 20:5).

As a system, the Commandments reinforce one another: as the number of Commandments that are enforced, or obeyed, increases, the easier it is to abide by the remainder, and the more resistant the society becomes to internal decay. For example, if the injunction against lying

were universally observed, then thievery would decrease as the confidence men, from the denizens of a telephone boiler room to politicians, would be out of business. In fact political lies would cease and many of the specious promises made by politicians seeking election would never be made. Candidates for office would have to "tell it like it is," not the way they would like to have it. As a result the "entitlement" programs, which transfer funds from the pockets of one set of people to the purses of another set would never be enacted, thus reinforcing the injunction against stealing.

When the Second Commandment, against the creation and worship of models, is adhered to by the government, then a major waste of public resources is avoided. If private individuals place their resources on a particular model of the universe, they are at risk, and we can learn from their failures—it is a form of useful death. Unfortunately, politicians and governments do not place their personal resources at risk when they adopt a model: they hazard the resources of the citizens and escape scot-free from the social disasters that they initiate. Examples of this abound: the Keynesian notion of contra-cyclic spending that has resulted, world wide, in great national debts; the idea that, if all sewer pipes discharged distilled water into the surface waters of the United States, the rivers, for instance, would become swimmable and fishable (this model was based on the assumption that pollution was primarily caused by the discharges from sewer pipes when, in fact, only about 15% of the pollutants originate there); the "nuclear winter" theory which was to motivate disarmament by the United States, and which did not withstand careful study and evaluation; the "war against poverty" which has already cost over $400 billion in payments with deleterious results on the conduct of the recipients and without the alleviation of poverty.[5] Idolatry can be hazardous to a society as well as to individuals.

There is a great need to teach the Second Commandment to the upcoming generation, as the injunction is not readily grasped, and the areas to which it applies must be

delineated to naive and unworldly minds. The younger generation cannot be taught the complexity of actual situations: they must first grapple with the underlying principles and the simplest applications. This Commandment is one of the most difficult to teach, and its sphere of influence must be clearly defined. Otherwise the legitimate, minor, models used as an aid to evaluating alternates, where empirical data is available to validate them and define the limits of application, may be crippled by the unwise application of this Commandment.

The Third Commandment, which prohibits blasphemy, reinforces the Eighth Commandment (against stealing). For in one of its forms, blasphemy involves trying to avoid the constraints of human existence by making direct deals with the Creator; material goods or benefits for which others are working or trading responsibly are to be bestowed on the deal-maker directly, without effort. It is only one step removed from actual theft, or from instituting a thieving government that hands out "free" benefits. This Commandment is not easily taught and is difficult in application.

The Fifth Commandment, which requires that the parents be honored is, of course, unenforceable by legislation but protects the family from destruction by political or economic entities. It must be taught, as it is not intuitively known.

The Tenth Commandment, which counsels against envy and covetousness, reinforces the Seventh and Eight Commandments (against adultery and stealing). Again this injunction must be taught to children as early as possible, as it is not enforceable by law. In fact the framework of law itself, which makes all persons equal under law, is the source of the idea of "fairness" (equal treatment). From the earliest days of childhood, children demand "fair" treatment from their parents, and the most prevalent complaint of "It's not fair" is that "he should have one and I don't get one too". Outside the field of law, and games that have rules, the idea of "fairness" is a dangerous chimera, with which this Commandment

deals. The natural biological variability in people's abilities and circumstances means that even under a system of laws that are uniformly and impartially applied, the results are not going to be equal. Some people are faster than others, smarter, stronger, better coordinated, can see better, have faster reflexes, better judgment, more studious, more motivated, healthier... the list of differences can go on. In each instance these differences will result in differing material results, and the idea of "fairness" has no place here. The notion that the universe has an obligation to be "fair" is a fatal error: It leads to envy and to efforts to reverse situations that have occurred within a society without malicious actions or intent. The efforts attributable to envy may include violations of the Commandments against murder, adultery, theft, and lying; they disrupt the internal workings of a just society. This Commandment must be taught, both by precept and by example, and violations found in public statements by individuals must be exposed and fought.

The remaining Commandments (against murder, adultery, theft, and lying) can be enforced by law against individuals. The problems for a society arise when those in responsible places, the government, the courts, academe, the professions, fail to understand the Commandments and where they apply. Specious arguments can be produced why this action, or that, though contrary to a Commandment, is permissible because of the favorable results (to some). In this connection the violation of any Commandment produces a ripple effect that makes the violation of others much easier, since the standards have been lowered. If the government steals from the population and the principal public discussion is how the proceeds are to be divided, why should individuals obey the Commandments? It is by violations at the leadership level of a society that the society decays and ultimately collapses with grave loss of life, of property, and of the chance for individual immortality.

The Commandments are succinct statements of the objective rules governing the continued existence of any large society. The continued existence of the society that operates with due regard to these rules means that it will not disintegrate from internal causes (earthquakes, tidal waves, and volcanic eruptions can still destroy communities and wider societies). Thus the immortality of the individuals who form it will be fostered, and children will be protected and nurtured. Any society that does not operate within the limits set forth by this system will disintegrate. Whether it will perish rapidly or slowly depends on the degree that its actions deviate from the established standards.

NOTES

1. The essay appears in Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, Signet Books, New American library, 1954.

2. "The New Morals," *Harpers* Magazine, Feb. 1968, p. 60.

3. This means that, if the entire population were polled on the subject, 95 times out of 100, the results will be those that we reported, and our numbers will not be exceeded by more than 3 percent, or the numbers will not be smaller by more than 3 percent.

4. There is, of course, no natural law that will prevent a bright, determined person from gaining an informal education and making his way in society by ability and determination. In fact there is an argument to be made that formal education, imposed on everyone, is socially counterproductive.

5. "Poverty" is a statistical concept, meaning that a proportion of an entire population has incomes substantially below the average. On an absolute basis, the average income of the welfare recipient in the United States is far above the average income of a member of the middle class in most countries of the world.

Erosion of values and the decline of the American economy

Or the fault, Dear Brutus, is not in Japan...

BY LAWRENCE E. HARRISON

"We don't save, invest, and produce; we spend, borrow, and consume."—*The New Republic*, July 9 & 16, 1990

What follows is the personal essay of an American, a lifelong Democrat, who has lived much of his adult life in Latin America, in the process developing a heightened appreciation of and respect for the great virtues of Western values and institutions in general and the United States in particular. My experience is shared, I think, by most Westerners who live in the Third World. But the experience also furnishes distance from which to view what has been happening in America and to perceive patterns of individual and societal behavior that evoke the distress of the Third World.

America's historic success is, I believe, based on seven fundamental values: freedom, justice, work, education, excellence, frugality, and community. The seeds of those values were planted during the colonial period and flowered in the Revolution, independence, and the Constitution. Freedom and justice have flourished, and in several respects are more robust today than they were two hundred years ago. Work, education, excellence, frugality,

and community have shown increasing signs of erosion since the 1960s.

The British, with permanent settlements in Virginia (1607) and Massachusetts (1620), were the principal source of an early American culture that was bifurcated: a southern branch drawn principally by the opportunities presented for plantation agriculture, above all tobacco, and gracious living; and a northern branch motivated principally by a need for religious expression outside the orthodoxy of the Church of England — and for a more egalitarian society.

Important among the early religious currents in the North were the teachings of John Calvin that influenced several Protestant denominations, particularly the Presbyterians. Some 250 years later, Max Weber would pinpoint Calvin's doctrines as the principal engine of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution. Calvin combined the concept of "calling" — "the fulfillment of the obligations imposed on the individual by his position in the world"[1] — with the concept of "election" — the belief that God has blessed a chosen few whose state of grace is apparent from their prosperity. Weber observed that the combination of the two "must have been the most powerful conceivable lever for the expansion of that attitude toward life which we have called the spirit of capitalism." And, "When the limitation of consumption is combined with this release of acquisitive activity, the inevitable practical result is obvious: accumulation of capital through ascetic compulsion to save."[2]

Writing in 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville foreshadowed Weber when he observed of the New England settlers:

> One would think that men who had sacrificed their friends, their family, and their native land to a religious conviction would be wholly absorbed in the pursuit of the treasure which they had purchased at so high a price. And yet we find them seeking with nearly equal zeal for material wealth and moral good — for well-being and freedom on earth, and salvation in heaven.[3]

The Protestants had rejected the dominance of the Roman Catholic priest. Luther preached "the priesthood of all believers,"[4] a goal that stimulated an intimate relationship between religion and education, not unlike—and for similar motives—the traditional Jewish emphasis on education. Harvard College was founded in 1636 principally as a theological institution. The same was true of most institutions of higher learning established in the following 150 years.

The English in the North were soon followed by the Dutch, Swedes, French, Germans, Scots, Irish Protestants, and even a sprinkling of Sephardic Jews and free blacks. The melting pot, the desirability and effectiveness of which is hotly debated today, began its work in the seventeenth century. The dominant culture was strongly influenced by Calvinist precepts: self-reliance, enterprise, hard work, austerity, and obligation to community, values that were all reinforced by the rigors of the New England climate and its rocky soil. Those values, along with justice and fair play, that we today associate with the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant tradition, would serve as a launching platform both for democratic political institutions, beginning with the Mayflower Compact, and the economic dynamism of the Industrial Revolution in the American North.

The principal political and social consequences of the plantation focus of southern colonization were the creation of a landed aristocracy and a slavery system not all that different from English and French colonial systems in the Caribbean; Spanish colonization of the Greater Antilles, Mexico, Central America, and South America; and Portugal's colonization of Brazil. To be sure, large areas of the South, particularly the Piedmont, were unsuitable to extensive agriculture. Many "Scotch-Irish"—Protestants, particularly Presbyterians, of Scottish descent who had migrated from Northern Ireland—established small farms in the uplands of Virginia, West Virginia, and the Carolinas. They did not practice slavery, and their values were much closer to the Northern than the Southern

mainstream. Many sided with the North during the Civil War.

In stark contrast with the Spanish and Portuguese landed aristocracies, the American South produced several leaders who rejected the aristocratic status quo and played a crucial role in the democratic experiment. The three superstars of the first years of independence were all Virginians: Washington, Jefferson, and Madison. Patrick Henry was a Virginian. (Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Henry all, by the way, publicly advocated the abolition of slavery at one time or another.)[5] So were Chief Justice John Marshall and James Monroe. James MacGregor Burns explains:

> Intellectual leadership may flourish in cultures where at least a few persons enjoy enough leisure and security from economic harassment to allow the fruitful reading, conversing, corresponding, writing, and reflecting necessary for disciplined and creative thought. The plantation life of Virginia provided such a culture for the masters... But tobacco, the underpinning of much of this wealth, was notoriously unstable in price and unpredictable in yield... many [of the aristocrats] employed their own intellectual resources to meet the challenge... Perhaps the contradiction itself—the interest in intellectual pursuits and the need to master prosaic business matters — helps to explain the full flowering of the cultural life and the political genius of the Virginia elites.[6]

But in another sense, the genius of Virginia was the offspring of the genius of Britain as it moved steadily forward on the frontiers of the Enlightenment, its values, ideas, and innovations reverberating through the Empire and the world. One example was the creation of the House of Burgesses in Virginia in 1619, reflecting evolution of the mother country's parliamentary system. (A House of Burgesses was also established in Barbados in 1639.) British thinkers and statesmen who shared the eighteenth century with the Virginia superstars included John Locke, Isaac Newton, Robert Walpole, William Pitt, David Hume, Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Thomas Robert Malthus, Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, and Jeremy Bentham.

While the ideologies and institutions of the elites evolved along somewhat similar lines in the North and South, the value system and the social structure in the South were, in a more general sense, deformed by slavery. Toqueville says, "Slavery ... dishonors labor; it introduces idleness to society, and with idleness, ignorance and pride, luxury and distress. It enervates the powers of the mind, and benumbs the activity of man."[7] Many other writers have made similar observations.[8] One consequence was a much lower level of entrepreneurial activity, particularly in industry and commerce, than in the North, a circumstance that bred resentment and dependency feelings in the South and was to become a major factor in the outcome of the Civil War.

The mainstream value system survived the Civil War and the economic and social crises that followed as the United States pursued its manifest geographic destiny and simultaneously transformed itself into an industrial power. That value system also substantially survived the impact of tens of millions of immigrants, mostly from Europe, immigrants whose children would, in most case, be swept into the value mainstream. By World War I, the United States had become one of the Great Powers. At the end of World War II, it was *the* Great Power.

Through the early post-World War II era, the traditional American value system, initially shaped by the early WASPs, was still largely intact.[9] Some aspects of immigrant culture had rubbed off: for example, the leadership of the labor movement was largely immigrant, but the fair-play current in the traditional value mainstream was a guarantee that unionism would ultimately be accepted. Ethnic influences were particularly noticeable in the arts and entertainment, which flourished. American English absorbed many ethnic words, particularly words beginning with "sch," from Yiddish: Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary includes schlemiel, schlepp, schlock, schmaltz, schmo, schmuck, schnook, schnorrer, shnozzle, and schtick. American eating habits were broadened: pizza,

bagels, kielbasa, and sweet-and-sour pork were eaten by everyone.

But the basic values of the Founding Fathers—freedom, justice, work, education, excellence, frugality, and community—persisted.

Americans came out of World War II supremely confident about themselves and their country. But today, the United States is a nation uncertain, even anxious, about itself. Many of us believe that a serious erosion of our national confidence, unity, and purpose has occurred during the past few decades. The drug and crime epidemics, the street people, the budget deficit, the trade deficit, the savings and loan disaster, Japan's phenomenal success, our plummeting from the world's largest creditor to the world's largest debtor, low voter registration, the sleaze on Wall Street and in Washington—these are just some of the indicators of and contributors to the national malaise.

Traumatic events, particularly the Vietnam War and Watergate, have played an important role. But at the root of that erosion of confidence, unity, and purpose is, I believe, the erosion of five of the traditional values that had brought us so much progress and success: The belief that work is a core element of a good life; the belief that education is crucial to progress; a commitment to creativity, achievement, and excellence; the belief that ostentation is wrong; and a strong sense of community. The erosion of these values has expressed itself above all in disappointing economic performance. Three examples:

1) According to World Bank statistics, of twenty-four "high-income economies" (mostly, the advanced democratic capitalist countries), the United States ranked twenty-second (at 1.5%) in annual per capita GNP growth during the twenty-two years from 1965 to 1987. Japan was the leader at 4.2%. France, Italy, and Canada achieved a 2.7% growth rate, West Germany 2.5%, the United Kingdom 1.6%.

2) During the period 1980-87, the United States and two mid-East oil exporters were the only ones of the twenty-four

nations to experience negative growth in exports. During the same period, U.S. imports grew faster than any other country's on the list.

3) In 1987, savings represented 13% of the U.S. gross domestic product, the lowest of the twenty-four high-income nations except for Israel. Japan's savings rate was 34%, West Germany's 25% in the same year.

But the deterioration is also apparent in a qualitative sense. Three examples:

1) Detroit's assertions of improved quality notwithstanding, *Consumer Reports* rated most 1988 American cars "below average" in reliability, most Japanese cars "above average," which, of course, helps to explain why Japanese cars continue to sell so well in the United States, the dollar devaluation notwithstanding.

2) Americans who are frequent international flyers avoid U.S. airlines because service and food are often so much better on foreign lines. The contrast is embarrassing to American travelers who care about the kind of image their country projects to the world.

3) The United States, which pioneered television and computer technology, has been overtaken by the Japanese in many of the same technologies it invented.

To be sure, value erosion can't be blamed for all our problems and shortcomings. Flawed policies have made their contribution: for example, the "supply side" economic policies of the Reagan administration — George Bush referred to them in the 1980 primaries as "voodoo economics" — helped fuel the unprecedented budget and trade deficits; the Reagan social policies increased the gap between rich and poor and further polarized politics; and the Bush "read my lips" tax policy (now abandoned) has left us with empty coffers at a time of enormous opportunity —and need—for leadership in the world. External events — e.g., the energy crisis — have adversely affected our economic performance (although, in the case of energy, surely no more than Japan's). And it is true that we have

shouldered a disproportionate share of the West's defense burden, although that burden should now decline.

But the malaise goes much deeper than policies, events, crises. Our national morale, our sense of confidence and purpose, have been affected. We wonder if we are not following ancient Greece and Rome, sixteenth century Spain, and modern Britain into decline. And we increasingly look to our past—admittedly through the haze of romance and nostalgia—to find America at its best. We sense that traditional American values have suffered.[10]

I believe the wounds to the American work ethic and the education, excellence, and frugality values associated with it have been inflicted principally by affluence. For most of our history, as my Depression generation need not be reminded, there were few governmental safety nets, and work was a necessity for survival. Most Americans did not articulate to themselves such truths as:

> Work is indispensable to the building of self-respect.
>
> Work well done is one of the most enduring sources of human satisfaction.
>
> Work teaches self-discipline.
>
> Work provides a structure for daily life.
>
> Through work, the individual discharges an obligation to the society.
>
> Work is the principal engine of progress and upward mobility.
>
> Human progress is the sum total of everyone's work.

But a combination of steadily increasing real personal income and the welfare programs made possible by affluence has divorced work from survival. That is all to the good in terms of the goal of elimination of poverty, surely a high priority for any decent society. But the consequences in terms of motivation and performance have been costly.

The turning point was, I believe, World War II. The war ended Depression unemployment. It also left the

economies and infrastructure of Europe, the Soviet Union, and Japan devastated, while the United States, blessed by its geography, escaped not only unscathed but with its economy humming, its technologies far in the van. The post-war years found us preeminent, cocky, complacent.

For prior generations, with survival at stake, work was an end in itself. For the generations that followed the war, work, often made easier by labor-saving devices, has increasingly become a means of acquiring things — cars, houses, boats, clothes, leisure time, etc. Our principal satisfactions now seem to come from acquisitions or leisure, not from a job well done. Our time horizon has receded from the future toward the present. In such circumstances, quality inevitably suffers. The focus of life increasingly becomes the fast buck. As my dentist, well into his seventies, said to me a few years ago, "It's hard to find professionals anymore."

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber attributed the industrial revolution principally, and I believe correctly, to an ethos that combined hard work with frugality, i.e., thrift and austerity. (To be sure, these values were operating at a time of rapid scientific and technological advance.) When frugality is removed from the equation, hard work and the related values of education and excellence may be compromised. I believe that value deterioration has a lot to do with my dentist's comment, our low national levels of saving and investment, the HUD scandals, and Ivan Boesky.

Our post-World War II arrival at the level of affluence that substantially divorced work from survival coincided with the advent of television. Television has become the medium of the acquisitive, now rather than later, ethos. In part a reflection of the incipient post-war value erosion, it has also accelerated the erosion. After the parent-child relationship, it is today probably the most influential shaper of values in America, ahead of school and church. Some believe that television is even more influential than the parent-child relationship.

In a 1987 *Washington Post* article entitled "Our Fragile Tower of Greed and Debt,"[11] television producer Norman Lear bemoaned "our deadly obsession with short-term success." Lear asserted, "Never before had the business of business been such a cultural preoccupation," and he went on to suggest "the possibility that American business is the preeminent force in shaping our culture and its values ...." He quoted a *Wall Street Journal* overview of the American Corporation: "Gone is talk of balanced, long-term growth; impatient stockholders and well-heeled corporate raiders have seen to that. Now anxious executives, fearing for their jobs or their companies, are focusing their efforts on trimming operations and shuffling assets to improve near-term profits, often at the expense of both balance and growth."

There is doubtlessly some truth in this view of the contemporary business world, particularly after the eight years of a Reagan "business" administration that failed to project the image of either high ethical standards or hard work. But there is also a major flaw in Mr. Lear's argument, one that is representative of an anti-business bias in the media, academic, and religious communities: the implication that the business world takes frugal, work ethic MBAs and brainwashes them with fast-buck values. Most people arrive in their mid-twenties with their value system substantially formed. And today, it is Mr. Lear's television that profoundly shapes those values during the formative years. There can be no question that children today are getting a strong fast-buck message from television and the movies. They are also getting a strong—and distorted—anti-business message, e.g. in "Dallas" and "Falcon Crest."

While there is thus an element of chutzpah in Mr. Lear's article, I have no reason to question his good intentions and concerns about what is happening to America. At the root of the problem is the fact that television, like other businesses, is driven by profit and loss considerations. Audience ratings attract sponsors, and mass audiences crave excitement, vicarious pleasure, and fantasy. Thus the disproportionate emphasis on crime, immorality, and fast

living in television fare. Pete Hamill made a relevant point in an *Esquire* article a few years ago: "In television shows, virtually nobody is ever shown *working* except cops."[12]

I believe that human creative capacity is the real engine of progress and that the society that is most successful in helping it people—*all* its people—realize their creative potential is the society that will progress the fastest. In economics, another name for that creativity is entrepreneurship. In psychology, "achievement" captures the same idea. "Excellence" is yet another formulation.

In his book, *The Achieving Society*,[13] David McClelland explores the roots of achievement, with particular emphasis on the variance of achievement motivation from society to society. He makes a compelling case, one in many ways confirmed by Japanese child-rearing, that children acquire achievement motivation principally between the ages of five and twelve. (My own experience as child and parent tends to bear him out.) He cites evidence that during this key growth period, moderate parental pressures are optimal and that achievement tendencies in children are reinforced by reasonably high parental standards at a time when a child can handle them; by limited parental interference; and by expressed parental pleasure in their children's achievements.

Today, television absorbs inordinate amounts of the time of most children between the ages of five and twelve—and their parents. Few televisions shows promote the ideas of achievement and excellence. Few television shows stimulate intellectual development. Most do little more than entertain, and that often with a message that stimulates acquisitiveness and cheap thrills. And watching television rarely requires effort, which is why it can be so hypnotic. Thus, during what may be absolutely crucial years in human development, television robs time from opportunities for work, experimentation, and achievement, as well as from the parent-child relationship that nurtures achievement motivation. It also inculcates a present-oriented, rapid-gratification view of the world which undermines the long-term, slow-but-sure, plan-and

-save current in our culture which has been so important a force for progress. Television may well have fathered the Now Generation and played a key role in our national indisposition to savings.

In fairness, there is much that television—particularly public television—offers that is constructive, stimulating, and educational. But the audience for quality television fare is small, mostly highly educated, and mostly upper-middle class.

It is the ghettoes that may suffer the most from television. While the American mainstream has opened up for roughly two-thirds of the black population, those who live in the ghetto are still influenced by the culture of slavery, perpetuated by the isolation of Jim Crow. The fast-buck, cheap thrill, acquisitive message of television combines with slavery's anti-work, anti-social preoccupation with *"now"*[14] in an explosive mixture that begets illiteracy, illegitimacy, drugs, gangs, crime, and, increasingly, the death of children and young adults.

In an economic sense, the ghetto is a double cost. Ghetto culture smothers creativity and deprives the broader society, to say nothing of the ghetto dwellers themselves, of the fruits of their creative potential. At the same time, the costs to that broader society resulting from drugs, crime, and welfare are formidable.

The current panorama is not one of unrelieved gloom. The integration of large numbers of blacks into the cultural mainstream is unleashing the heretofore largely suppressed creativity and productivity of a significant minority in our population. The sex role revolution, whatever its costs, has similarly liberated the creativity and productivity of a far more numerous segment of our population. Our primary and secondary schools suffer by comparison with European and Japanese standards, but our quality universities continue to be the best in the world. And more post-secondary age young people are in schools in the United States than in any other country.

One of the greatest virtues of American culture—and the American system — is an openness that invites criticism, identification and definition of problems, and problem solving. With respect to the relative decline of the United States, this process is well underway in such books as Ezra Vogel's *Japan as Number One—Lessons for America*,[15] Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*,[16] and Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*.[17] Anthropologist Marvin Harris points to post-World War II business concentration and bureaucratization as the root cause of the national malaise in *America Now*,[18] and journalist James Fallows, in *More Like Us*,[19] stresses the elimination of the barriers to opportunity and mobility implicit in such institutions as licensing and testing.

While long-run costs of uncontrolled immigration are potentially grave, the immigration of achievement-prone Asians—Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Indians, Vietnamese (often of Chinese extraction)—and Cubans has injected a vitality that is felt in the economy, the academic world, and the arts and professions.

The absorption of these high-achievement immigrant groups and the racial revolution notwithstanding, there is evidence of an erosion of trust in the society, and with it the sense of community. In *The Civic Culture*, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba found a high level of trust in the United States in the late fifties: 58% said "Most people can be trusted."[20] The same question was asked in the World Values Survey in 1981: 41% felt that most people could be trusted.[21] The American Election Study series found that, in 1958, 71% of Americans trusted their government to do the right thing; in 1980, the figure was 25%.[22] In 1966, according to other surveys, 48% of Americans had confidence in ten basic American institutions (e.g., the executive branch, congress, the supreme court, the media); in 1987, the figure had dropped to 28%.[23]

We still suffer the credibility aftereffects of Vietnam and Watergate and of the "sixties generation" that those two traumas, affluence, and television spawned. High levels of mistrust of government and politicians, but also of

business and the professions, is apparent. Divisions within the academic community are often bitter. The incivility of dialogue within the congress, between congress and the executive branch, between the media and the politicians, and within the academic world reaches levels of intensity and even hostility far beyond what I remember before the mid-sixties.

I am particularly troubled by the political polarization and rhetorical stridency of the past few decades. For many Democrats, the label "conservative" evokes words like "selfish," "greedy," "uncompassionate," maybe even "fascist"[24] or "evil." For many Republicans, as was apparent in the 1988 presidential campaign, the label "liberal" implies Utopianism, financial and policy irresponsibility, guilt complexes, "flakiness," even un-Americanism or treason. In most public policy issues there are legitimate conservative and liberal positions that demand respect if not agreement. My sense is that the tolerant political middle where that debate can constructively take place has diminished measurably during these decades, with more people moving toward the intolerant extremes.

With the erosion of trust comes a reduced identification among people in the society, a movement toward the uncaring individualism that has historically characterized the Iberian countries and their former colonies, as has political polarization. One "lesser virtue" manifestation of this loss of sense of community is littering, epidemic in the ghetto but commonplace throughout the rest of the society, even the upper-middle class suburbs. Littering says, "I really don't care enough about you—or the environment we share—to take this candy wrapper to a trash barrel" (which may require a few extra steps).

Much has been made in the wake of Japan's extraordinary economic achievements about the benefits of Japan's "communitarianism" and the costs of America's "individualism."[25] While I am troubled about the erosion of the sense of community in America, I don't think that the contrast between Japan and the United States is nearly as great as it has been made to appear. The United States

clearly emphasizes individualism more, including in child rearing. But from its beginnings in New England and in the uniting force of *e pluribus unum*, the American sense of community has been an important shaper of a society in which there is a deeply-rooted tendency of people to organize to solve problems and seize opportunities. Team sports, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, extra-curricular school clubs, and church groups are some of the symbols of the emphasis on "communitarianism" in acculturation of American children. Nor is participatory management a Japanese invention. Good managers of any nationality (including those at Boeing and IBM) have long known that lone wolf decision making is both risky and likely to be based on incomplete comprehension of relevant facts.

One consequence of the erosion of trust and the sense of community, a consequence aggravated by the fast-buck ethic, is the increasing resort of our society to lawsuits. Fair play, the broader interests of the society, and economic efficiency have suffered in the process. Former governor of Colorado Richard Lamm, an attorney himself, has observed:

> The international competitiveness of the United States is affected by its litigiousness — the greatest on earth. Japan trains 1,000 engineers for every 100 lawyers; our nation's rate is the reverse. Two-thirds of all the lawyers in the world practice in the United States .... This litigiousness adds to the costs of American goods [and services, e.g. physicians, I might add] as assuredly as does our inefficient management and labor .... Litigation also dampens entrepreneurship. It discourages American business from taking risks, retards innovation and imagination .... You can't sue a nation to greatness.[26]

What can be done to promote constructive cultural change in the United States? Six factors that occurred to me in the Latin American context offer a convenient structure for approaching the value impediments to progress in the United States today. They are presidential leadership, religious reform, educational reform, the media,

reform of management practices, and, above all, improved child rearing practices.

Presidential Leadership

I think it is significant—and reassuring—that George Bush and Michael Dukakis were the presidential candidates in 1988. Both project a commitment to traditional American values, particularly the work ethic. But I think that Bush was more successful in communicating that commitment, particularly through his emphasis on revived excellence. Dukakis's penchant for austerity may have made him cartoon bait, but it was a very useful reminder of the importance of one strand of the traditional American value fabric that has been much neglected in recent years. It was almost as if the electorate was saying, after the California glow of the Reagan years, "It's time to get back to the basics." And so we turned to New England — George Bush seems to me much more like Leverett Saltonstall than Lyndon Johnson — the wellspring of the Protestant ethic in our nation.

In his first years in office, President Bush has repeatedly stressed the traditional values in his rhetoric, and he has been far more successful in projecting a commitment to the work ethic and austerity that was his predecessor, who lost all remaining credibility (and his dignity) in this respect when he accepted $2,000,000 in return for a visit to Japan. But Bush has failed to communicate a comprehensive vision of what is wrong with America and what it must do to get back on track. He does not appear to understand why we "spend, borrow, and consume" rather than "save, invest and produce." He seems to buffeted by difficult issue after difficult issue without perceiving the underlying patterns and causes that connect the issues — and without developing an agenda to do something about them.

The country needs somebody who both understands how and why we have gotten into trouble, and what needs to be done to start a process of revival. That process must

involve both a reinvigorated government and a reinvigorated private sector in harness.

President Bush's extensive background in public service has left him substantially free of the contempt for government that characterized the Reagan—and Nixon—years and that is at least in part responsible for the abuses of power and corruption of those years. That contempt has resulted in increased politicization of public service—e.g. in the increased proportion of "political" ambassadors, few of whom are qualified for their jobs—and in a general erosion of quality and morale in the federal government. If you don't think government is important, then you don't mind appointing an unqualified campaign contributor to a high-level job.

For those Americans who are concerned about the prospect of "Japan as Number One," it is well to remember the key role played by the Japanese career government service, consistent with the high prestige that attaches to public service in the Confucian order of things. Ronald Dore notes, "The Japanese value and honour the public service, and an intelligent industrial policy is one consequence of this."[27] Ezra Vogel elaborates:

> The politicians make many important decisions, but compared to the American government the top politicians have little leverage over the bureaucracy. The prime minister may appoint one politician to be minister and another parliamentary vice-minister in each ministry, but there are no other political appointments in the ministry, and the person who really runs it is the administrative vice-minister, the highest career officer in the ministry. The key decisions in the ministry are made by the permanent bureaucrats rather than by the politicians of the Diet and the cabinet ....
>
> Leading bureaucrats have attended the best universities and have risen through the ranks in a carefully prescribed fashion. Tokyo University students are acknowledged to be at the apex of the two million students in Japanese universities. The top graduates... enter the most prestigious ministries (Finance, International Trade and Industry, Foreign Affairs) and agencies (Economic Planning, Land, Environmental), providing they pass the ministerial written examina-

> tion and demonstrate poise, breadth, and commitment in interviews .... This selection procedure ensures that elite bureaucrats are not only extremely able but are also protected by an aura of respect, rivaled perhaps only by the elite bureaucrats of France ....
>
> Japanese bureaucrats are constantly amazed at the power the American government grants to cabinet members and department heads who have so little government experience and so little preparation for the position.[28]

The American business/financial community has a comparable problem, partly self-inflicted, to be sure, but importantly also the result of an anti-business message projected by the media and the academic community, a message roughly comparable to the low esteem in which business activity was held by the Confucian mandarins. We are reminded of Joseph Schumpeter's prediction that democratic capitalism would be so successful that it would subsidize a large intellectual establishment that would inevitably undermine the system because of its hostility to entrepreneurs.[29] We are also reminded of the declining prestige of industry and business in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth century that has often been cited as the cause of Britain's decline.

That anti-business message, which has considerable currency among the liberal elite (for example, Norman Lear's *Washington Post* article referred to earlier in this chapter), is that the really "good," "compassionate," and "thinking" people seek intellectual/artistic careers, the media, the professions, social work, and perhaps government (although Hollywood treats government officials with about the same contempt that it treats businessmen). The greedy, the corrupt, the callous, and the irresponsible flock to business, according to that view.

There is a double injustice in this kind of arrogance and snobbery. In my experience, people in the "honored" professions can be mean-spirited, self-seeking, intolerant, discourteous, and even dishonest in their dealings with others. I often find people in business who are nicer, more

principled people than some of the "good" and the "compassionate." But beyond my own subjective feelings, and I hasten to add that there are many exceptions on both sides, the fact is that what has permitted the arts and the universities to flourish in the United States has been the success of our private enterprises, the principal sources both of tax revenues and philanthropy.

In his rhetoric, example, and actions, the president can help to restore the prestige of public service and business. As one small example, the president could accord substantially greater public recognition, along the lines of the annual Kennedy Center awards to artists, to achievement in government and business.

Religious Reform

My sense is that religion has shifted its emphasis from personal morality, character, and the living of a good life to the correction of social and political ills. I recognize that both personal and social/political emphases are present now, as they were fifty years ago. But whereas the former used to be dominant, it seems to me that a shift toward the latter occurred at about the time—after World War II—that affluence disengaged work from survival and that television became the national obsession.

The values of many religions in America today are similar to those of the academic and media communities. The good life is found more in pursuing causes than in building character and seeking truth and achievement. The churches often feel more comfortable promoting redistribution than growth policies, notwithstanding the overwhelming recent evidence—e.g., in Eastern Europe, China, Cuba, and Nicaragua—that poverty is more effectively attacked by growth than by redistribution, particularly in democracies, where politics is inevitably influenced by the quest for social justice. In the redistributive moral context, business looks more like the problem than the solution. Yet, like the arts and the universities,

religion is heavily dependent on the philanthropy made possible by business success.

The conservative religions, particularly evangelical Protestantism, appear to be so hung up on their causes, above all the fight against abortion and the winning of souls, that personal morality, character, and the living of a good life are relegated to lower priority concerns, as with the more liberal religions. In their quest for rebirths and money, the evangelical, fundamentalist religions have turned to television, with corrupting consequences comparable to the impact of television on the broader society.

I am not arguing that religion should ignore social and political issues, although I must say that, particularly when exaggerated guilt feelings are in play, the causes can get very dubious—e.g. blind support of the Marxist Left in Central America at a time when hundreds of millions of Eastern Europeans (including Russians) are proclaiming the failure and abusiveness of the same model. What I am advocating is (1) more appreciation by religion for the crucial role a dynamic, expanding economy plays in improving the conditions and prospects of the poor, and (2) renewed emphasis on morality, decency, achievement, and social responsibility in the individual—more sermons that stress the personal life well and creatively lived as an effective way for the individual to contribute to the well-being of the society and the world.

Norman Lear attributes the erosion of American values principally to the business community. I see the media, particularly television, more at fault. But religion must also share the blame.

Educational Reform

The qualitative problems of our primary and secondary schools are the subject of continuing intense debate. My principal concern is not with the techniques of teaching math, English, and the physical and social sciences successfully, although those are surely important issues. My concern is motivation: how to inculcate the value of

work, achievement, creativity, and community. I appreciate that the principal locus of motivation is the home. But getting parents more concerned about the motivation of their children is a daunting problem, particularly in an era when the incidence of women in the work force has increased dramatically and there is a consequent tendency for parents to transfer child-rearing responsibilities to the school.

The role of the school is thus all the more important. More rigorous standards, heavier homework loads, smaller classes, and increased incentives for and recognition of achievement can help during these crucial years of personal development when, at least in the view of David McClelland, which I share, the values and attitudes that make for effective and responsible adults are forged.

I also believe that the teaching profession is both undervalued and underpaid in the United States. A part of the problem is the destructive and largely erroneous idea that teachers are people who teach because they can't do anything else. The quality of American teaching surely will improve with higher salaries—more capable people will be attracted to the profession, and they are more likely to motivate their students. One of the most striking differences between Japan and the United States is the substantially higher prestige that attaches to the teaching profession in Japan, consistent with the Confucian tradition. And when I say "teaching profession," I am talking about primary and secondary teachers as well as university professors.

We tend to focus our concerns about value erosion, particularly in the wake of Professor Bloom's book, at the university level. But we must remember that that is where our primary and secondary teachers are prepared and that many of them leave universities imbued with the relativistic approach to values that is the conventional wisdom in a good part of academe. I agree fully with Professor Bloom that relativism—the notion that value judgments have no real basis; that all societies are equally good, or bad; that hard rock and rap are as good as Brahms—constitutes a

real threat to our view of our own society, our aspirations for it, our ability to bring about constructive change, our ability to define and produce excellence, indeed, in the long run, to the survival of society itself.

Our ability to reverse the trends that have contributed to our national malaise may ultimately depend on the message of values defeating the message of relativism.

The Media

I have stressed throughout this chapter that the media, above all television, are powerful shapers of values and attitudes. I don't want to leave the impression that I think that the transcendental problem of television is repeated elsewhere in the media, other than in the movies. I think that the better American newspapers and news magazines do an excellent and balanced job of reporting and analysis, one that ranks their professionalism at the top by world standards. I only wish that more Americans were reading these newspapers and news magazines.

But the transcendental problem is television (and the movies) and particularly (1) its undermining of the work ethic, creativity, and excellence, and (2) its promotion of quick gratification and acquisitiveness. The problem is so enormous, and the difficulties of dealing with it so great in our democracy, that my mind boggles when I think about what might be done to channel television's great power toward more constructive ends. One idea that occurs to me that may have some merit is for the president to name a bipartisan, blue-ribbon panel of television executives and artists, educators, social scientists, politicians, and others to study the impact of television and recommend ways, including legislation, of making that impact more constructive.[30]

Management Reform

At a time when the value of work, achievement, and quality has eroded, improved ways of motivating people

must be a top priority of management. This is the management dimension in which the Japanese appear to have excelled.

Profit sharing and employee stock ownership plans are increasingly popular ways of strengthening employee identification with the enterprise and promoting excellence. But beyond these kinds of financial and ownership incentives lie other motivational avenues. A decentralization strategy that delegates to the employee responsibilities for analysis of problems and opportunities, and encourages the employee to participate in problem solving and policy formulation, is likely to result in a more motivated, creative, and efficient employee. Decentralization and broadening of responsibilities also help subordinates to grow professionally, with attendant long-range benefits for the enterprise through expansion and enrichment of the pool of future managers and supervisors. An enterprise that is managed this way is likely to have high morale, with the further efficiency and creativity that flows from it.

Ethics also bear on morale and efficiency. Unethical behavior by management saps the confidence of employees in management, thus undermining morale. It also sends the message that unethical behavior at lower levels in the organization will be tolerated. Honesty and decency trickle down. So do dishonesty and irresponsibility.

Fifty years ago, many workers felt so lucky to have a job, and the work ethic was so much stronger, that boredom was not nearly as much of a problem as it is today. The problem of boredom is magnified by a labor force that brings substantially more education to the workplace; in 1940, the average American adult had about eight years of education, in 1980, more than twelve. Although we have major concerns about the quality of American education, particularly at the primary and secondary levels, the fact remains that the United States, with 59%, is ahead of all other countries in the percentage of its post-secondary age population that pursues post-secondary studies.[31] (Canada is second with 55%, Sweden third with

37%. The figure for Japan is 29%.) A labor force this highly educated, and with a wide variety of diversions within easy reach, is clearly not going to find stimulation and satisfaction in repetitive, simple tasks. The goal must be, to quote historian Otis Graham, a "labor market [that] constantly moves its labor force toward higher value-added activities requiring higher skills as well as substantial labor participation in what are too often considered only managerial decisions."[32]

Improved Child Rearing

I continue to believe that it is parents who are potentially the most important agents of constructive cultural change in any society. It is the parents—by their example, by the techniques they choose in child-rearing, and by the way they relate to their children—who principally shape what their children become as adults. Japan's success reflects both values that promote progress and child-rearing techniques that promote achievement and group consciousness.

The significance of the parent-child relationship can be seen most graphically — and tragically — in the ghetto: teen-age mothers, often high school dropouts, who are shackled by the anti-progress, anti-social, anti-work cultural chain that runs from slavery through Jim Crow to the ghetto, and also strongly influenced by the rapid gratification value of the broader society. They pass on those values as single parents to their children. Their sons are at high risk for school dropout, drugs, and crime. Their daughters are at high risk to follow in the footsteps of their mothers: school dropout, teenage pregnancy, welfare.

Better child-rearing is the key to the broader revival of the values of work, education, excellence, frugality; and community. Child-rearing techniques tend to persist unmodified, generation after generation; the principal "training" the parent receives for child rearing is his own rearing by his parents. Child psychology is a mainline scholarly discipline, and while there is still a lot we don't know

about what kind of parenting makes for effective, creative, responsible adults, there is a substantial body of knowledge and understanding that is not getting through to many parents. Research on effective child rearing should have a high priority, but so should ways of communicating to prospective parents the lessons the experts have learned, for example through courses in child rearing for high school students.

Among nations, power and wealth are obviously far more equitably distributed today than they were fifty years ago, and that is to the good. Western Europe's recovery, integration, and current economic and political dynamism are important gains not only for the Europeans but also for us. The same thing is basically true, if less obvious because of competition, of the Japanese miracle. The recent dramatic liberalization in Eastern Europe is likely to have comparably beneficial results for the world community, and perhaps especially for the United States through the reduction of the defense burden it has borne disproportionately.

The goal of repairing the damage to American culture should not be to restore the overwhelming American dominance of the post-war years. That is not in any event feasible, nor is it desirable. The goal is to assure the progressive evolution of human well-being, justice, creativity, and excellence in our own society, both for its own sake and for the contribution it can make to the progressive evolution of humankind. But if we do not understand the causes of our relative decline in recent decades and act on that understanding, the decline will continue. We have recognized the symptoms for some years, but we have not acted. My fear is that we are now so committed to the self-centered, present-oriented aspects of the post-industrial value system that we will *not* act, short of some cataclysmic event such as a prolonged depression—which I neither predict nor expect.

I conclude this chapter with something Henry Rosovsky, then dean of the Harvard College faculty, said in 1980:

> It takes a long time to become aware of decline. Most economic historians agree that Britain's climacteric occurred about one hundred years ago, but this fact did not really become a matter of public concern until World War I .... In my opinion, the principal factors were internal and human, and therefore avoidable; British entrepreneurship had become flabby; growth industries and new technology were not pursued with sufficient vigor; technical education and science were lagging; the government-business relationship was not one of mutual support. When we look at our own country today in the perspective of history, the danger signals seem obvious.[33]

NOTES

1. Max Weber.*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, New York; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950, p.79.

2. Ibid, p.172.

3. Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*, New York and Scarborough, Ontario; New American Library (Editor, Richard D. Heffner), 1956, p.48.

4. Quoted in David C. McClelland. *The Achieving Society*, Princeton; D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1961, p.48.

5. Thomas Sowell, *Ethnic America*, New York; Basic Books, Inc., 1981, p.193.

6. James MacGregor Burns, *The Vineyard of Liberty*, New York; Alfred A. Knopf, 1982, pp.225-56.

7. Tocqueville, p.42.

8. In *Underdevelopment is a State of Mind*, I noted the parallel observations of Sir Arthur Lewis, David McClelland, Carlos Rangel, and Melville Herskovits on the adverse impact of slavery on values, particularly work.

9. In *The Unheavenly City Revisited* (Boston and Toronto; Little, Brown and Company, 1974), Edward Banfield observes, "Eventually, however, all the immigrant groups succumbed to the Old Stock American, future-oriented ideal."(p.67).

10. See, for example, Frances Moore Lappe, *Rediscovering America's Values*, New York; Ballantine Books, 1989.

11. *The Washington Post*, 5 April 1987, p.C1.

12. "Breaking the Silence—A letter to a black friend." *Esquire*, March 1988, p98.

13. David C. McClelland, *The Achieving Society*, Princeton; D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1961.

14. Banfield identifies "present orientation" as the principal obstacle to progress for the lower class in *The Unheavenly City Revisited* (e.g. p.61).

15. Ezra F. Vogel, *Japan as Number One — Lessons for America*, Cambridge and London; Harvard University Press, 1979.

16. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, New York; Simon and Schuster, 1987.

17. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, New York; Random House, 1987.

18. Marvin Harris, *America Now*, New York; Simon and Schuster, 1981.

19. James Fallows, *More Like Us*, Boston; Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989.

20. Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture*, Boston and Toronto; Little, Brown and Company, 1963.

21. Ronald Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*, p.438.

22. Cited by Russell J. Dalton in *Citizen Politics in Western Democracies*, Chatham, New Jersey; Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1988, p.230.

23. Ibid, p.234.

24. I was astonished, in 1981, to hear a Spaniard who teaches at Harvard describe Ronald Reagan as "a fascist" as he introduced a Spanish Socialist to an ample audience in Cambridge. The comment was roundly applauded.

25. See, for example, George C. Lodge and Ezra F. Vogel, eds., *Ideology and National Competitiveness*, Cambridge, Harvard Business School Press, 1987.

26. Richard D. Lamm. "The Uncompetitive Society," *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, May 1987, pp.32, 34.

27. Ronald Dore, *Taking Japan Seriously*, Stanford; Stanford University Press, 1987, p.15.

28. *Japan as Number One*, pp.54-58. I am reminded of the comment of Stanford anthropologist Thomas Rohlen in a conversation in Kyoto in March of 1990: "In Japan, the bureaucracy is the clean hand, the politicians the dirty hand."

29. Joseph A. Schumpeter. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, New York; Harper Brothers, 1950.

30. A similar recommendation was made in by Robert Gorham Davis in a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* published on 6 February 1990.

31. World Bank, *World Development Report 1988*, Washington, DC, Table 30, p.281.

32. Otis L. Graham, unpublished article, "Re-Thinking the Purposes of Immigration Policy," p.30.

33. Quoted in James Fallows, *More Like Us*, p.11.

Protecting our heritage of religious liberty

BY
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In spite of persistent challenges from the popular culture and setbacks in the courts, Americans today continue to enjoy a level of religious liberty perhaps unequalled in the world. The key word is *continue*. The struggle for religious freedom against government intrusion and social erosion is one that stands in continuity with the earliest ideals of American history. Religious liberty is arguably the earliest of our freedoms, having been a key impetus to the settling of colonial America. This nation owes its origins in substantial part to its role as a refuge for religious dissenters who were oppressed by European governments.

Our inheritance of religious liberty is preserved in the religion clauses of the First Amendment to the Constitution, which provide: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." But the security of that constitutional inheritance depends on its interpretation and implementation by courts, legislatures, and executives. The interpretation of religious liberty guarantees is susceptible to shifting tides of public sentiment — attitudes toward secularization of society, toward new religious groups, and toward individuals who are conspicuous for their seemingly eccentric religious beliefs. Cases involving Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Amish punctuate

the history of religious liberty in America in ways obviously influenced by the good or ill repute of the particular group.

The 1980s witnessed a strong rise (and sometimes, fall) of prominent religious—particularly Christian—spokesmen at a time of steadily increasing secularization of society. The resulting conflicts have led to an ambivalent attitude toward religious liberty in today's society, reflected by the Supreme Court's uneven pattern of decisions in that area. As the nation heads into its third century under the Constitution, there are a variety of reasons for concern about the vitality of the religious liberty protection—and especially about the commitment of judges and elected officials to maintaining our heritage of religious liberty. What is needed now, before trends adverse to religious liberty have a chance to become a constant pattern, is clear thinking about the nature and importance of religious liberty within our constitutional framework and what can be done to preserve it.

From the standpoint of cultural conservatism, religious liberty is an issue of central importance, for several reasons. First, religious liberty serves an end higher than other, worldly ends of government: it frees individuals, in association with others like-minded, to worship and serve God in the light of their consciences and convictions. The very purpose of government, as the founding generation recognized, is the protection of the natural, inalienable rights of persons. Freedom of religion is one of the foremost of these natural rights. Historically, religious liberty in America was considered a truly *inalienable* right - a right of all persons that precedes the "social contract" of government and that the people could not assign into the hands of government, even if they wanted to do so.

Second, because of this understanding, religious liberty is singled out by the Constitution—the legal anchor of our society—for special protection. Any consistent jurisprudence of "original intent" must take seriously the fact that

the framers desired unique protection for religious conscience against majority encroachments.

Third, religion and autonomous religious institutions play a necessary role in our society as mediating institutions between the power of government and individual citizens. Religious institutions are the enclaves of individual and community autonomy outside the control and direction of an increasingly powerful secular state. As Alexis de Tocqueville observed of America in the 19th century—and Richard John Neuhaus has echoed in the late 20th century—religion and religious institutions are a vital source of the public virtue and public morality necessary to sustain democratic institutions against the tendency of democracy to decay into every-man-for-himself. Throughout the history of our republic, religious groups have served to undergird democracy at the same time they undermine the government's potential for overweening power. It is no surprise that de Tocqueville ranked religion as the "first of [our] political institutions." Without it, we are left with Neuhaus's "Naked Public Square."

The values of religion can be preserved by government either through the state affirmatively embracing them or by allowing them to flourish through vigorous protection of the right of persons and groups to the free exercise of religion. The first option was the preferred strategy of virtually all nation-states at the time of the American founding—as it was long before and well after. That option was, of course, explicitly rejected in the Establishment clause ("Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion ...") as a danger to religious liberty and pluralism. Instead, the second option was chosen by the framers in the Free Exercise Clause ("... or prohibiting the free exercise thereof"). But while political liberals have often seized on the establishment clause as if it were a command to secularize society and strip it of all religious influences (a wrongheaded notion which has been challenged with mixed success in court in the past decade), political conservatives can be faulted for failing to hold up the value of religious liberty on the free exercise side. The

consequence has been that the battle to preserve our cultural and political heritage of religious liberty has been a defensive one—staving off establishment clause attacks against religion—rather than an affirmative one of seeking to expand the room allowed to freedom of conscience and practice for all religious. The reasons for this failing are rooted in the failure to recognize the essentially *conservative* nature of claims of religious liberty against government power.

Interpretation of the Free Exercise Clause has become caught in an unfortunate and unfruitful battle between a "liberal" view, favoring expansive protection for free exercise, and a "conservative" view, favoring narrower protection for religious liberty. The former view is commonly identified with the judicial activist wing on the Supreme Court while the latter view is identified with adherents of judicial restraint. But, ironically, as we shall see, in this instance the "liberal" position is more in accord with values of cultural conservatism and the original understanding of the framers, and the "conservative" position tacitly accepts the expansion of government power over private institutions.

The problem with the liberal view is that it has been grounded not in the original understanding of the framers (as recent scholarship suggests it could have been), but in the arbitrary authority of activist judges. For judicial liberals, free exercise of religion is one of those "fundamental" rights to "special solicitude." Its limits are not defined by the text, history or structure of the Constitution but by the commitment of judges to libertarian principles generally *and*—an important extra step—the application of those principles to religion. However, the liberals' application of these libertarian principles is generally selective, amounting to Free Exercise Clause protection for only those religious groups perceived as "minorities," as if the Free Exercise Clause did not apply to protect religious freedom for persons and groups perceived as mainstream but constituted merely a form of "affirmative action" for

non-mainstream views. Thus, the classic "liberal" free exercise decisions have vindicated the rights of Amish families to limited exemptions from compulsory school attendance after the eight grade—the landmark case of *Wisconsin* v. *Yoder* in 1972—and provided unemployment compensation for persons who were forced to leave their jobs for unique religious reasons, such as the Seventh-Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses. But the Court has refused to extend those same principles to Christian parents seeking to educate their children at home in accordance with their religious convictions, to religious colleges seeking protection from government intrusion into their internal affairs, and to a Jewish serviceman seeking to avoid being penalized for wearing a (non-uniform) yarmulke.

Moreover, the Court—led by the liberal wing—has struck down as violating the Establishment Clause laws protecting employees' rights to exercise their Sabbath and providing remedial instruction services to disadvantaged children attending religious schools. Liberal justices of the Supreme Court have thus construed the Free Exercise Clause as *requiring* special accommodations of religion that they would find *prohibited* by the Establishment Clause as improper "advancement" of religion if undertaken voluntarily by government. The liberal view is thus essentially lacking in meaningful standards, depending for its results on which clause of the First Amendment the Court decides to invoke. The irony has not been lost on conservative justices, most notably Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who has repeatedly tweaked the liberals for their inconsistency.

The "conservative" view has largely been a reaction against the intellectual shortcomings of the liberal view, and is best represented by Rehnquist's dissent in *Thomas* v. *Review Board* in 1981, the Jehovah's Witness unemployment compensation case, and Associate Justice Antonin Scalia's recent majority opinion in *Employment Division* v. *Smith*, involving Native American religious use of peyote.

In *Thomas*, Rehnquist would have construed the Free Exercise Clause narrowly, as not providing any special protection for religion but only requiring that government not *overtly disfavor* religion. While this view avoids the contradiction with the Establishment Clause (which Rehnquist would also construe more narrowly) that so mars the liberal view, Rehnquist himself conceded that the narrow reading could not be traced to the original intent of the Free Exercise Clause. Rather, Rehnquist argued, because of the growth of government and attendant greater involvement of government in private affairs that could not have been envisioned by the framers, "we simply do not know how they would view the scope of the two Clauses."

It is somewhat strange that Justice Rehnquist — and some other conservatives (like Scalia) following him — have thus argued for a narrow reading of free exercise. For it does not at all follow from the Court's habitually overbroad misreading of the Establishment Clause (a criticism with which we heartily agree) that the Free Exercise Clause must retreat in its wake to avoid contradiction. The remedy for a wrong interpretation of the Establishment Clause is to correct the interpretation of the Establishment Clause. (The historical intent here is clear: the Establishment Clause forbids government *coercion* of religion, not government *accommodation* of religion that in no way interferes with the rights of others not to exercise religion).

Even more regrettable is the too-quick willingness to accept the premise—not shared by those who drafted the Free Exercise Clause — of broad government power to regulate vast spheres of private conduct, not excepting religion. The remedy for an overbroad expansion of intrusive government power is surely not the contraction of the sphere of religious liberty and autonomy, but the preservation of that sphere, even when that means carving out exemptions for religion from what has become the expanded jurisdiction of government. Such a view is more consistent with a culturally conservative notion of the proper role of government than is a view that seeks to

narrow the sphere of religious liberty to make way for unlimited impositions by the government. Moreover, it is more consistent with the constitutional text itself, which, by its terms, singles out religion for special protection.

Moreover, from what we know of the framer's intentions, protection of a broad sphere of religious liberty exempt from government cognizance is more consistent with their position than is a view that holds government may intrude on religious liberty so long as it does so indirectly or inadvertently. The recent scholarship of Professor Michael McConnell of the University of Chicago, published in the May 1990 issue of the *Harvard Law Review*, strongly suggests that a broad interpretation of free exercise was both contemplated by the framers and consonant with popular notions of religious liberty and limited government that existed at the time.

The fundamental premise of the Free Exercise Clause was, for the framers, the same as that of limited government generally—that there are vast spheres of ordinary human relations and conduct that lie outside the power of civil government to regulate or control. Religion is one of those areas, being reserved entirely to the people. James Madison, the most prominent draftsman of the First Amendment, conceived of this limitation on government in terms of the idea of jurisdiction—religion was beyond the reach of government's authority.

Madison's thinking in turn reflected John Locke's conception of distinct, separate "jurisdictions" for the respective authority of church and state and a careful delineation of the proper business of each. Thus, government may not intrude upon the autonomy of religious institutions, and the free exercise of religion is subject to limitation only when it adversely affects the rights of others or society at large in some important way, and only to the extent of such adverse effects. As a consequence the Free Exercise Clause has, until very recently, consistently been held to require that a law be more than neutral in appearance; it has required also that the law in its application to the par-

ticular case be neutral in its effects upon the religious exercise or religious choice of the person affected.

Justice Scalia's opinion for a divided (5-4) Court in *Employment Division* v. *Smith*, decided in April 1990, is a significant departure from these principles, however. In *Smith*, the majority essentially embraced the position of Justice Rehnquist's dissent in *Thomas*, nine years earlier. *Smith* involved the ingesting of peyote, a mild hallucinogenic drug, as a Native American religious ritual. The state law against peyote use was held not to require an exemption for religious peyote use, *not* because the drug was inherently dangerous or because of the state's inability to control drug trafficking (concededly not the case with the religious use of peyote), but simply because the law was neutral on its face—it prohibited all peyote use, religious or otherwise.

The Court's opinion in *Smith* came as something of a shock. The Court abandoned decades of precedent in order to create a new rule that no party had argued was necessary. (The state had argued that religious exemption from its drug laws would create grave social harm, thus placing the case within one of the exceptions recognized by the framers where limited infringement of religious liberty is justified by a compelling interest of government). It did so without any inquiry into original intent, resting instead on a policy judgement that the broad understanding of free exercise was a "luxury" that "we cannot afford" any longer. In light of the growth of government and the increased diversity of religious beliefs since the First Amendment was adopted, Scalia reasoned, protecting a sphere of religious liberty exempt from government control would either require recognizing religious exemptions "from civic obligations of almost every conceivable kind" or require courts to undertake the task of defining the exact parameters of that sphere of religious autonomy—a task made difficult by the expansion of government power. In short, Scalia's argument is that even if a broad sphere of religious liberty made sense in the framer's day, it is unfeasible today, and that courts might as well give up trying

to protect such a sphere of religious liberty! It seems strange to call such a view "conservative."

The Rehnquist-Scalia "conservative" view is somewhat lazy in merely reacting against the excesses and foibles of the Court's liberals, rather than searching the historical record for the original understanding of "free exercise" and its relationship to the original understanding of limited government and developing a positive theory of how those principles apply in today's world. This is a challenging, but by no means impossible, task. The historical research of Professor McConnell and others suggests that the framers *did* intend religion and religious institutions to be, to a very significant extent, beyond the reach of secular government. And a truly "conservative" political theory of government and the Constitution would seek to permit no greater degree or kinds of government intrusion into this sphere of religious autonomy than would have been permissible in the framers' days, notwithstanding the growth of government and the increased secularization of society.

The narrow view of Rehnquist and Scalia, that any ostensibly "neutral" law is permissible under the Free Exercise Clause, is convenient and easy to apply, but potentially ruinous to our inheritance of religious liberty. "Neutrality" of this sort would be a powerful weapon for suppression of religious practices and conscience at the hands of all-powerful government. History provides some colorful examples. In Roman times, everyone was required to burn incense in front of an image of the Emperor, ostensibly as a test of loyalty. Though not itself a religious act, but an ostensibly neutral, secular demonstration of loyalty (akin to requiring the saying of the Pledge of Allegiance), it was well known that it violated the religious conscience of Christians and many Jews, thus affording the state a secular pretext for punishing disfavored religions. And the books of Second and Fourth Maccabbees (in the Catholic Bible and the Protestant Apocrypha) record the proclamation of Antiochus IV Epiphanes that all persons be required to eat pork—a "neutral" law whose

clearly desired effect was to provide a secular basis for oppression (torture and murder) of Jews whose religious convictions forbade them to eat pork as an unclean food.

Employment Division v. *Smith* suggests some modern possibilities for religious oppression. If government may ban the religious ritual use of peyote by means of a facially neutral law, a Christian congregation's serving of wine as part of the sacrament of Holy Communion might, for example, be banned during family worship services under a "neutral" law barring any business, club, or facility from serving alcohol where minors are present. Government might neutrally require that a non-profit institution not discriminate against women in any way, and withdraw the tax-exempt status of a church that declined to ordain women to the clergy.

Neutral anti-discrimination laws protecting practicing homosexual conduct (as some do) could be applied to require a church or church school to hire homosexual preachers and teachers in violation of its religious beliefs. Government could uniformly prescribe the curriculum of even private religious schools, including religiously objectionable material, or forbid corporal punishment or other forms of discipline in such schools. Government could force clergymen to divulge confidential communications made pursuant to religious obligation (such as the Catholic sacrament of confession), on the same basis as it may subpoena any other persons who may have knowledge of possible illegal conduct by another.

A state might require all physicians and hospitals licensed to practice medicine in that state to be willing to perform all lawful medical procedures—including abortions—if requested to do so by a patient. Religious hospitals, doctors, and other medical personnel whose religious beliefs preclude them from committing or assisting in abortions would be forced to do so or lose their licenses to practice medicine (and probably their jobs). Similarly, a court could order a religious hospital against its religious conscience to withdraw food and water from a permanently comatose patient in order to end her life, if her

family persuades a court that this is desirable. Fanciful? This last example was an actual case three years ago, where a state supreme court held that not only could the family invoke the woman's "right-to-die" without her consent, but that it could direct a religious hospital to carry out the killing without *its* consent and against its conscientious principles. Over half of the other examples are also based on actual court cases. The danger of the rule of *Smith*, if it comes to be accepted, is very real.

Besides the growth of government and the acquiescence of judicial "conservatives" in the expansion of government power into areas traditionally within the domain of religious institutions and private conscience, the other major factor contributing to an erosion of religious liberty under the First Amendment is, as alluded to previously, the Court's misreading of the Establishment Clause. By misreading that clause as requiring a rigid "separation of church and state," rather than neutrality toward religion within the public sphere (complementing the autonomy accorded the private sphere of religious exercise), the Court has created a serious problem. If the Constitution requires strict separation, yet government's jurisdiction is permitted to grow, encroaching on the traditional sphere of religion, religion must necessarily be forced out—expunged from an expanding public sphere and denied any private sphere. Religious liberty is thus squeezed from both sides. The result is a functional *hostility* to religion—which should be thought to violate the Free Exercise Clause under even the narrowest interpretation of that clause.

The remedy is twofold. First, return to a more balanced interpretation of the Establishment Clause — one that strives for government neutrality, accommodation, and voluntarism with respect to religious exercise and religious choice, not a hyper-separationist hostility to the presence of religious values and their exercise in the public square. Second, return to a vigorous interpretation of the Free Exercise Clause—one that protects the jurisdiction of religion from the encroachments of government.

The 1980s saw an uneven trend for conservatives seeking to preserve religious liberty: mixed success on the Establishment Clause front and a consistently disturbing trend on the Free Exercise front. The general course of the Establishment Clause decisions in the past decade was favorable to conservatives, though there is a two-steps-forward-one-step-back quality to the pattern.

In 1981, in the important case of *Widmar* v. *Vincent*, the Court upheld the constitutionality of student religious group meetings on state university campuses using university facilities. A religious group at the University of Missouri-Kansas City had sought to use the University Center for its meetings on the same terms as other student organizations who were allowed access to facilities. The Supreme Court rejected, 8-1, the argument that the Establishment Clause somehow required discriminatory exclusion of a religion from this forum open to all student organizations alike. In 1984, in the landmark Equal Access Act, Congress extended the determination of the Supreme Court in *Widmar* to the high school situation as well, holding that where public high schools allow student organizations to meet before and after school or during special club activity periods they must not discriminate against student organizations that are religious in nature. After many years of challenges to the Equal Access Act, and efforts by some school districts to evade its requirements, the Supreme Court settled the issue in its May 1990 decision in *Board of Education* v. *Mergens*. The Court upheld the constitutionality of the Equal Access Act's requirement for equal treatment of student prayer groups, 8-1. The *Mergens* case was a tremendous victory for the cultural conservative agenda of protecting students' rights to meet together for voluntary prayer at school without violating the prohibition against state-written, state-sponsored "school prayer." Equally important, the *Widmar* decision, the Equal Access Act, and now the *Mergens* decision advance religious liberty by countering the idea that the Establishment Clause requires discriminatory exclusion of religion from general benefits available to all.

A string of several Supreme Court decisions has affirmed the same principle in the context of financial benefits that are accorded to religious organizations or persons on the same terms as they are made available to a variety of non-religious organizations or persons. In *Mueller* v. *Allen*, decided in 1983, the Supreme Court narrowly affirmed the constitutionality of tuition tax credits for parents with children attending private, including religious, schools. The decision could have great consequences for "voucher" plans and other programs designed to foster educational choice, including the freedom of parents to choose religious instruction (and child care) without financial penalty. The *Mueller* decision rejects the idea that such benefits, when offered across the board, and without respect to whether religious or nonreligious education is chosen, are somehow unconstitutional. A related decision by the Court in *Witters* v. *Department of Services* (1986) reaffirmed the principles of *Mueller* in a broader context. In *Witters*, the Court upheld the constitutionality of a grant of vocational rehabilitation funds to a legally blind man in Washington state who desired to use his state benefits to pursue a career in the ministry. The Court held that because the aid was provided to the individual, who in turn made the choice of its use, it did not violate the Establishment Clause simply because an *individual* chose to employ the benefits to a religious purpose. Finally and most recently, the Supreme Court in 1988, in the significant case of *Bowen* v. *Kendrick*, upheld the right of religious organizations to participate in government grant programs funding social welfare services. The *Kendrick* decision upheld the constitutionality of the Adolescent Family Life Act, a statute of Congress designed to combat the problem of teen pregnancy by subsidizing private programs engaged in sheltering unwed mothers, counseling, and providing various other support services. The program had been challenged on the ground that it involved direct government grants to religious organizations. But the Supreme Court held that, so long as the program was designed to serve the government's secular

purposes and was neutrally applied, the mere fact that religious organizations were included did not violate the Establishment Clause. The course of these decisions in *Mueller*, *Witters*, and *Kendrick* is significant for the growing pattern of rejection of Establishment Clause challenges based on hyper-separationist views, which would require exclusion of religion from public spheres and public programs, rather than equal access for religion in the public arena.

However, not all of the Supreme Court's recent cases follow this pattern. In 1985, in a pair of decisions, *Grand Rapids* v. *Ball*, and *Aguilar* v. *Felton*, the Court narrowly struck down (5-4) state and federal programs that provided supplemental and remedial educational services to students in private and public schools alike. The programs involved sending publicly-funded teachers to the schools of disadvantaged students. Congress intended that the program benefit all students alike, whether they attended public or private (including religious) schools. The Court, however, held, in apparent contradiction of its other decisions, that the mere presence of public teachers on private, religious school grounds created an unconstitutional "entanglement" of church and state, and might have the effect of "advancing" religion. The decisions in *Grand Rapids* and *Aguilar* are disastrous, but their effect as precedents may be mitigated by the more recent *Kendrick* case.

Another group of Establishment Clause decisions has involved challenges to government accommodation of religion. In *Presiding Bishop* v. *Amos*, decided in 1987, the Court unanimously rejected the idea that the federal government's desire to accommodate the autonomy of religious institutions by exempting them from Title VII's prohibitions on religious discrimination in employment somehow violated the Establishment Clause. The Court held that merely allowing churches to "advance" religion was not the same thing as government itself advancing religion, and that it was entirely appropriate for government to abstain from interference with autonomy of

religious decision making (such as internal employment practices made on the basis of religious affiliation) because of the grave free exercise problems that would be otherwise presented. The *Amos* decision, because it is so recent and because it was unanimous, is a powerful rejection of the idea that carving out a sphere of autonomy for religion is somehow religious "favoritism" or establishes Establishment Clause difficulties.

An additional cluster of decisions, while less directly relevant to free exercise, is important for the Court's recognition of the propriety of accommodation of religion in the public sphere. The Court in 1983 upheld the constitutionality of legislative chaplaincies and prayer (*Marsh* v. *Chambers*), in 1984 upheld the constitutionality of nativity scenes placed on municipal property (*Lynch* v. *Donnelly*), and in 1985 upheld in principle (though not in the particular case) the constitutionality of moment-of-silence laws (*Wallace* v. *Jaffree*).

Again, however, the pattern has not been consistent. The moment-of-silence law in *Jaffree* was struck down on the ground that it had a religious "purpose," as was a Louisiana law requiring the balanced presentation of evolutionism and creationism in public schools (*Edwards* v. *Aguillard*, 1987), leaving the regrettable impression that religious values can have no role in influencing legislation, even if such laws do not in fact result in state compulsion of religious exercise. And in *County of Allegheny* v. *ACLU* (1989), the Court retreated from its decision in *Lynch* concerning display of religious symbols during holiday seasons. A badly divided Court (with no majority agreeing as to the reasoning) struck down a nativity scene display in a public courthouse, but upheld a Menorah positioned outside a municipal building. The bewildering variety of opinions assures that this issue will remain unsolved for some time.

While the general course of the Establishment Clause decisions remains favorable, the Court in recent years has rejected virtually every Free Exercise Clause claim brought before it. The only exceptions have been three scattered

cases involving unemployment compensation for persons losing their jobs because of their religion, creating the impression that the Free Exercise Clause has been reduced to the Free Unemployment Compensation Clause.

It would be impossible to canvass the Supreme Court's many holdings in Free Exercise Clause cases over the past decade, but three decisions illustrate the decline in respect for religious liberty that culminated in the decision to abandon rigorous protection of free exercise altogether in *Employment Division* v. *Smith*. In *Goldman* v. *Weinberger*, decided in 1986, the Court considered the free exercise claim of a Jewish Air Force Captain to be free to wear a yarmulke (or skullcap) while on duty, pursuant to his sincere Orthodox religious convictions. (Interestingly, Captain Goldman had previously been an Air Force chaplain and had been permitted to wear the yarmulke). The Court rejected the claim, holding that the military's interest in uniformity as a means of insuring discipline exceeded in all cases the right to free exercise of religion. The following year, 1987, in *O'Lone* v. *Shabazz*, the Court rejected the free exercise claims of medium security prisoners to exercise their Muslim faith by attending their required Friday afternoon services. Even though prison personnel had allowed the inmates to attend the services previously, and no substantial interference with prison order or discipline would have been occasioned by allowing them to continue to do so, the Supreme Court upheld the prison officials' discretion to deny access to religious services by prisoners. And in 1988, in *Lyng* v. *Northwest Indian Cemetery*, the Court rejected the free exercise claim of Native American religious practitioners to enjoin government development of a road and logging site through their historic religious grounds. The Court held that even though the government might well destroy the Indians' religious practices, the practices merited no Free Exercise Clause protection because they occurred on government lands. The Court declined to require that the government show the usual "compelling" interest in development and the absence of less intrusive alternatives.

While each of these decisions is in a sense understandable, the erosion of the "compelling interest" standard in these cases led to its outright abandonment in *Employment Division* v. *Smith* in 1990—leaving the free exercise of religion essentially unprotected from whatever facially neutral acts the legislature otherwise has power to pass, as noted above. While many in our society might be unsympathetic to the claims of the Muslim convicts to a modified prison schedule, or of American Indians to exemption from drug laws, the principles adopted in those cases logically apply to free exercise claims by mainstream religion, as the case of Captain Goldman illustrates. A string of lower court decisions rejecting the claims for governing autonomy by Christian schools attests to this trend. For example, the highest court for the District of Columbia, in the case of *Georgetown Gay Rights Coalition* v. *Georgetown University*, rejected the Free Exercise Clause claim of a private Catholic school to refuse to be forced to sponsor and financially support (as required by a local D.C. ordinance) a homosexual advocacy group on its campus that espoused views anathema to the church hierarchy. The shrinking of the Free Exercise Clause, then, is not a development solely of concern to minority or fringe religions. It has come to effect the rights of culturally mainstream religions, such as Christianity and Judaism, to the free exercise of religion when activist governments at the state or federal level seek to impose their views of proper conduct and morality on religious persons and religious institutions. The "parade of horribles" that could follow from *Employment Division* v. *Smith* has already started.

The Goldman and Georgetown University situations have happy endings—by and large. Congress by statute effectively reversed the Supreme Court's holding in the Goldman case by making it permissible for military personnel to wear religious clothing in uniform, so long as it is unobtrusive. The Georgetown University decision has also been the subject of legislation. Congress, in passing

the District of Columbia's appropriations acts, has sought to require the modification of the D.C. Human Rights Act to accommodate religious objections to forced support of homosexual groups. While these efforts have been embroiled in legal challenges unrelated to freedom of religion, the "Armstrong Amendment" (named for its sponsor, Senator William Armstrong of Colorado) also shows that the legislature, not the courts, is the first line of defense for religious liberty and accommodation. The *Mergens* decision, upholding Congress's creation of a statutory right to equal treatment for religious student groups at public high schools, is a powerful example. The *Amos* case, upholding the constitutionality of congressionally mandated exemption to Title VII employment discrimination laws, is another example. So is the religious tenets exemption written into the Civil Rights Restoration Act (the "Grove City Bill"), imperfect and awkward as it is.

As long as the courts continue to uphold such statutory provisions designed to assure religious autonomy and opportunity—and the 9-0 decision in *Amos* and 8-1 decision in *Mergens* suggest that they will give Congress considerable deference in this regard — legislatures should continue to protect religious rights in fashioning general legislation. Legislators no less than judges swear an oath of allegiance to the Constitution, and are thus obliged to make conscientious efforts to protect constitutional rights, including those under the Free Exercise Clause, not merely to "punt" the issue to the courts. Legislatures are not required to legislate up to the limits allowed by the Supreme Court, but can and should preserve the sphere of religious autonomy. Indeed, the one saving grace of Justice Scalia's opinion in *Smith* is that it explicitly invites legislatures to craft statutes accommodating religion in ways not required by the Court. The area of child care legislation provides an appropriate occasion for such legislative protection of religion from government encroachment.

At a broader level, the problem of continued intrusion on the sphere of religious liberty is one of big government combined with secularized society. The first level of

defense against increasing conflict between religious liberty and government power is not to assert such broad government power in the first place. Where contemplated legislative enactments would intrude broadly on the sphere of religious liberty, it is worth reconsidering such a piece of legislation. This is a duty for executive branch officials in federal and state government, in using their powers of leadership, advocacy, and the veto, as well as for legislatures.

Finally, because of Congress's broad power in the area of civil and religious rights, it may enact *affirmative* protections of religious liberty broader than the Court has found in recent decisions to be required by the Constitution. Congress could essentially "overrule" *Smith* by passing a simple statute along the lines of the following:

> No officer or agent of federal, state, or local government shall apply any requirement of law so as to forbid, prevent, or penalize the exercise of sincerely-held religious beliefs, except where necessary to protect public health, safety, or security, or the private rights of others.

In doing so, the system of separation of powers will have worked to preserve the original understanding of the Free Exercise Clause by virtue of Congress's picking up where the Supreme Court has fallen short.

By the same token, state governments may adopt broader protections of religious liberty than required by federal law as a matter of their own statutory or constitutional law. Indeed, many state constitutions already contain similar language. It may simply be a matter of state courts giving to the language of state constitutions their full force, rather than stripping those provisions of any effective meaning, as the U.S. Supreme Court has done with the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment.

The heritage of religious liberty in America depends for its continued vitality on the vigilance of all three branches of government, at both the state and federal levels. It depends on a recognition of the dangers posed by the growth of government to the essential autonomy of

religious persons or groups. It depends also on a sensitivity to the importance of the free exercise of religion as a fundamental personal and community liberty, and as an essential building block of a society that is both ordered and free.

Conservatives and civil rights

BY ROBERT L. WOODSON

In the past, the black community had to rely on its own resources to survive. Black advancement was inextricably linked to black self-determination. With a sassy and fearless newspaper published during the height of slavery, with entrepreneurs ready and willing to purchase a slave's freedom or guarantee his safety after escape, with the formation of the all-black towns and the building of a self-sustaining support apparatus, black Americans exhibited backbone, resolve, energy, vitality, creativity, innovation, and intellect at a time when the country was generally either indifferent or hostile to black interests.

It is ironic that in more recent times, when civil rights gains were being made, the self-sufficient economic infrastructure of black America was being eroded. Small black firms, the backbone of the racially localized black economy, could not compete with the newly integrated, low priced, large-volume department stores, supermarkets, fast food chains, and shopping centers. Many black businesses became casualties of racial progress.

Government aid programs, as it soon became clear, would also exact a price from the black community. From the beginning, these programs did not address the problems of the poor with solutions that had the input of the poor. The poor and the disadvantaged, if pulled into the government's social welfare industry machine, were turned into passive "clients" to service and lead by the

hand into poverty limbo. This government-knows-best policy herded low-income families into high-rise buildings that bred crime and frustration, discouraged the work ethic, fostered dependency on public assistance, and stifled the initiative of small entrepreneurs with programmed-to-fail bureaucratic restrictions.

The result is that today there are any number of erroneous assumptions—from the right and from the left—about an "appropriate" civil rights agenda for black Americans. For example, the left says that what black Americans need are more affirmative action programs. In fact, affirmative action programs have rarely benefited the poorest of blacks, for whom, ironically, this demand has most often been made. As early as 1965, then-reporter William Raspberry wrote:

> Civil rights progress, remarkable as it has been in recent years, has bypassed poor Negroes. ... Most civil rights gains have benefited the Negro middle class and left the disadvantaged masses largely unaffected. ... Negroes who weren't doing badly to begin with are doing even better, while those at the bottom stay there.[1]

Increased job opportunities at the top, desegregation of posh restaurants and exclusive membership clubs and other such gains generally benefit those citizens in the top tier of the workforce, including union members and professionals. The unskilled, the untutored and the jobless unfortunately usually stay that way.

Another example: because poor blacks are unable to take care of themselves, government should fill the void. While it is an uncontestable proposition that a government's worth should be measured by the extent to which it provides for its weakest citizens, the left has institutionalized welfare to such an extent that the industry has as its chief objective the perpetuation of itself.

The fact is that most of the money going into poverty programs does not go to the poor but to those who "serve" the poor. In New York City, for instance, a survey of the $14.5 billion that flows into the city to meet the needs of the 1.2 million poor people—one-fifth of that city's popula-

tion—found that about 67 cents of every dollar is going to social workers, counselors and all the people who serve the poor rather than to direct services.[2]

This scenario is the same as somebody offering you a job for $10,000 but giving you only $3,000 in cash and then offering $7,000 to social welfare professionals to serve you. The latter constituency forces the guardians of the liberal standard to defend the existing system rigidly. Other such disincentives to reform the current system reveal a basic flaw in the black-white alliance that is currently the philosophical and ideological framework of the civil rights movement.

Similarly, the conservative approach (or lack thereof) to civil rights matters has generally been limited to an indictment of Great Society programs with few, if any, specifics regarding an alternative approach. Conservatives believe that all we have to do is open up the marketplace and meritocracy will judge the winners and losers. They miss the point entirely. Without the requisite information (and resources), black Americans will never be able to compete equitably in the nation's free enterprise system. And although a market-oriented strategy is critical to successful problem-solving, conservatives must recognize that the modern civil rights movement has done little to further and, in fact, has even made more difficult the quest for economic liberty.

Secondly, conservatives have consistently been mute on the issues of race and racism. According to the White House Policy Analyst Jim Warner:

> We didn't say to the racists who had embraced conservatism that there is a very clear distinction between conservative principles and racism. If we had done that—if any reasonable effort were made to do it now—I believe a goodly number of blacks would come into the conservative ranks. [M]ost conservatives spend very little time thinking about race. And when they think about it, they think in terms of some imagined homogeneity of political opinion among blacks.[3]

Thus, the poor are locked in a bipolar debate as to what is in their best interest. And they gain nothing from this

debate. To quote an old African proverb, "When bull elephants fight, the grass always loses." Many traditional propositions—from the right and the left—must be challenged and new strategies must be adopted if conservatives are going to break out of the current impasse.

The poor realize that their situation is not improving. Their disappointment with existing poverty programs is like a man who sat in for months at a Mississippi lunch counter, and when the restaurant was integrated found that what he wanted to eat was not on the menu. A lot of poor people have been sitting at the welfare lunch counter in anticipation of a menu to their liking, and some 20 years later they are finding that they are part of a permanent and growing underclass.

As we look back over the past five decades, a pattern has emerged in America of government taking responsibility for economic opportunity. The debate that has unfortunately arisen from this has always been between those who felt that we should have a more centralized approach and those who believe that responsibility should devolve to local units of government. The result is that we have become locked into a romance with "New Federalism," as if somehow the idea of devolution in itself represents an innovation.

More broadly, we have a phony debate in which, if you support the poor, then you must be for expanded welfare and increased budgets and if you are callous and cold-hearted—as conservatives are supposed to be—then you are only interested in cutting social services' budgets.

An alternative conservative position need not be cast in terms of whether we increase or decrease social spending. The issue should be, how can we bring about fundamental welfare reform? There is already disenchantment with the welfare system both on the left and on the right. The question is: How do we begin to generate some momentum for reform, and what are the key ingredients?

At the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (NCNE), we are trying to do things differently. We go to low-income communities and examine their capacity. We do not want to know how many black female-headed households exist with children in prison, in jails, or on drugs. We want to know how a woman raises five children by herself, in public housing and on welfare, but gets off welfare in three years and manages to send all five children to college. In other words, we examine the strengths of poor people, document their successes, and then we try to bring them together to determine what are some of the common principles—and what are some of the common barriers they face—that can be "exploited" to provide opportunity.

In order to do this, we must forge strategic alliances based on common principles—something the conservative movement failed to do with poor people. The conservative community must overcome its Achilles' heel in this respect. At a conference at the Heritage Foundation, Congressman Newt Gingrich (R-GA) noted that the conservative movement will never become a popular movement as long as it is perceived to be against the poor and against minorities. And that is certainly how it is perceived. Even more disturbing, conservatives have gained this reputation the old-fashioned way—by earning it.

Because many conservatives were on the wrong side of most of the civil rights legislation, they do not have a lot of credibility when they talk of the importance of a colorblind society. There must be two conservative think tanks working on behalf of every disgruntled white fireman who has complained about reverse discrimination. Conservatives are not nearly so aggressive when blacks are the victims;therefore, they continue to feed the notion among blacks that the only time race is of interest to them is when whites are offended.

On the other hand, conservatives generally have not exploited the conditions of poor people for political gain, and they have not profiteered on the suffering of poor people in the way many liberals have. Moreover, the chief

constituency of conservatives happens to be business, and business has no proprietary interest in the maintenance of the underclass. The economy is expected to generate about 16.3 million new jobs in the next 15 years. An examination of the demographic trends suggests that this means more of the workforce of the future will be black and Hispanic, at a time when a million minority youngsters are dropping out of school and a million more are graduating illiterate. For America to be competitive, both domestically and internationally, business must deal with a workforce that will consist increasingly of minority people. Business must now begin to address the needs of poverty in a serious way —not as an act of charity or corporate responsibility, but as a means of survival.

A key to understanding the underlying harmony between conservatives in business and the poor is to remember business's appreciation for the entrepreneurial spirit. Business people look at outcomes and consequences as a measure of effectiveness and success, as opposed to some of the short term indicators of social scientists.

Business can appreciate someone who invents a solution to a problem regardless of their education. In our economic life, the main requirement is to produce a product or service that is of value to people in need—that has some value in the marketplace. But in our social welfare system, credentials tend to count more than results.

A lot of rules that bar poor people from participating in their own problem-solving have to do with professional credentials. A mother can raise five children successfully under adverse circumstances, but if she tries to set up a day care center as a business, the state says she must have a master's degree in early childhood education. There is often an erroneous assumption in the bureaucrat's mind that certification is synonymous with qualification.

In the marketplace, on the other hand, if that same person were to invent a software package that could make IBM $30 million, no one is going to ask whether or not she has a degree in computer science; the marketplace is out-

come driven. Poor people have demonstrated that they can reduce crime and teen pregnancy and better manage public housing without a lot of professional credentials. Conservatives must learn to embrace these social entrepreneurs.

Additionally, if conservatives want to establish strategic alliances with poor people, they must do more than publish policy tracts and studies condemning the existing system. They must offer creative alternatives to that system. They must forego alliance with the poor on the issues usually defined to be of importance to them and instead agree to meet with them and join in coalitions with them to solve specific problems. They must join low-income blacks in the quest for economic liberty, the forgotten civil right. Conservatives must acquaint themselves with the rules of the marketplace that restrict black entrepreneurship. They must join forces with those who are penalized by rules and regulations that keep them welfare-dependent.

When economic regulations are adopted to limit competition, as so many current ones are, they are, in the words of one analyst, simply "modern versions of Jim Crow." Conservatives can chart a new course for civil rights. They can accept the baton of economic freedom and pass it cleanly to their black teammates. Such an alliance is the only course to the future.

NOTES

1. William J. Raspberry, "Civil Rights Gains Bypassing Poor." *The Washington Post*, October 29, 1965.

2. David Grassman and Geraldine Smolka, *New York City's Poverty Budget*, (New York: Community Service Society, 1984), p.9.

3. William Raspberry, "A Conservative Silence," *The Washington Post*, June 26, 1987.

A Jewish perspective on the common culture

BY RABBI ARYEH SPERO

In contrast to pronouncements often made by spokesmen for major Jewish organizations, a survey of teachings found in classical Judaism—Torah, Talmud, and rabbinic responsa—demonstrates a decidedly conservative posture on a whole range of issues.

Take, for example, abortion. Over 2500 years of Jewish legal and moral dialectic teaches that abortion is wrong, that the fetus is certainly nascent life and, as such, must be protected. Any exceptions that are allowed are limited to safeguarding the mother's life and essential health, rape or severe fetal deformity. No serious rabbinic authority has ever suggested that a woman has a total right over her body, over her fetus. On the contrary, she being the carrier of the fetus has a special obligation to protect that which depends on her. The vast majority of cases in which abortion takes place today are clearly, in the eyes of Judaism, outside the rubric of allowable abortion.

Many ask whether legislation against arbitrary abortion would be effective in light of society's reluctance to imprison women who would abort. However, quite often, definitive legislation, in and of itself, even absent punishment, engenders compliance. For law, representing as it does the combined consensus of a society, has a powerful influence on how we think and act. It shapes and orients our feelings about a particular matter, not to mention the

social pressure it fosters. We begin to think something *is* wrong when the law indeed forbids it.

Unlike drugs, abortion is a non-addictive vice and, hence, a law against it could produce in individuals a moral mind-set with a concomitant moral compliance. In current Jewish life, for example, one frequently observes a yielding by individuals, in thought and action, to communal religious norms, albeit there is no internal mechanism that punishes offenders. Vigorous public sloganeering such as "Just say No to Abortion" would be highly effective.

More than the abortion issue, our society is endangered by our ever-continuing, subtle acceptance of the welfare-state concept, a way of thinking totally at odds with how I understand the Bible, the Torah. For at the heart of welfare-statism is a Rousseau-like belief that individuals (unless they are part of the perceived establishment) are rarely responsible for their own misdeeds or unsavory behavior, that society is at fault. The perpetrator, in the eyes of the welfare state, is but a victim. However, the Bible's most profound statement on humankind is that man—the individual—is created in the Image of God, and specifically, that by the virtue of his intelligence, man has freedom of choice and is therefore responsible for his actions, responsible to choose correctly.

The failure to make individuals accountable for their own actions, the transfer of individual responsibility onto society at large, leads, as it did in New York recently after the prolonged savage beating and raping of a Central Park jogger by seven young men, to a chorus of welfare-state activists declaring that "it was *society's* 'indifference' to these young men that caused them to go out 'wilding'." That is a curious indifference, in light of the past quarter-century's outlay of tens of billions dollars in Great-Society, welfare-state programs aimed at the community from which these youths emanate. A philosophy that "understands" rape and attempted murder is bankrupt and dangerous.

Similarly, under welfare-stateism, if a particular group does poorly on a scholastic or job test, it is not the student or applicant's worry, it is the *test* which is at fault.

Torah sees the state as an agency which, in a limited way, protects citizens from one another. And so, in Leviticus, for example, it mandates that all commercial weight scales be accurate. Torah was wary of any system that overregulated people's economic life, citing the prohibition of *bal tosef*, do not excessively regulate or enact many burdens. Nowhere in Torah or in Talmud is found support for redistribution of wealth, which is the welfare state's vehicle for engineering society and controlling individual's lives.

In fact, Torah taxed minimally. It was aware that excessive taxation, as later evidenced during the aftermath of King Solomon's reign, leads to a social crumbling. According to the Talmud, taxes were levied primarily for those items beneficial to all, such as the waterwells, bridges, roads and armies.

The welfare-state proclaims that each resident is entitled, simply by virtue of his residency, to the by-product of another's labor, entitled to slices of the aggregate, to reapportionments. But that is leftism, though it is ensconced under the more palatable term, liberalism. In contrast, Torah's powerful and noble demand for equality in jurisprudence, i.e., equal protection under the law for all citizens — rich or poor, powerful or weak — never degenerated to schemes for economic equivalence. Biblical, Mishnaic, and Talmudic jurists and codifiers never capitalized on the Jubilee situation, where lands were re-appropriated, to enact land reforms, but remained satisfied with the arrangement of returning lands to original private owners. Torah never asked that individuals be so self-effacing and overburdened by taxes that they end up working for others to the deprivation of their own families.

The bi-annual gleanings and corners of already-harvested fields, left for the needy, were certainly not all-inclusive, cradle-to-death, transgenerational support

structures. They demonstrated an acknowledgement of God's blessings, being mindful of others. Gifts to Temple priests were, as stated in Numbers 18:21, in *exchange* for services rendered to the people by the priests.

Though the bulk of tithings were allocated to the Levites and Priests, who, by law, were prohibited to own land and businesses so as best to serve the people, or offered to the Temple, Torah (Deut. 15:18) enjoins the *individual* to give charity, *tzedakah*, and perform *ge'milut chesed*, acts of individual kindness from one to another. But welfare-state proponents are, in truth, uncomfortable with the notion of charity or the idea of benefactors. For it implies that the individual *chooses* to help another, while they demand a coerced redistribution of wealth under a categorical imperative called entitlement rights.

Inheriting a liberal spirit by offering charity and assistance, living with less in order to ameliorate the condition of people *truly* unfortunate is an acknowledged social responsibility. "A world of kindness God builded," declares the Psalmist. However, personal and family deprivation for the sake of fashioning and erecting left-liberal polities or in order to satisfy those who exploit society's generosity is never called for. Mankind is called upon to relieve suffering. It is not duty-bound to alleviate discontent and envy, the driving force behind left-liberalism. The need to be of generous, liberal spirit should not be confused with *political* liberalism. The need to be humane does not translate into a call for economic parity and equal results.

Though certainly the private sector cannot meet all of society's challenges, welfare-state activists would, in principle, be against the possibility. For, in truth, their bottom-line is not primarily to help the needy but to restructure society, and tax-funded welfare-state programs are the proven tools to accomplish it. By centralizing almost every category of our lives into bureaucracies, welfare-state advocates are keenly aware that they can control the destiny of people. For, in today's world, centralized bureaucracies

surrender to, indeed are tools of, the political left and egalitarians.

These bureaucracies promote group rights as opposed to individual, traditional family, neighborhood and church rights. Spokesmen who do not advocate the egalitarian, leftist message are ignored by the bureaucracies. So, for example, when speaking on women's issues, Jean Kirkpatrick, Linda Chavez, and Elizabeth Dole are dismissed as if they are somehow not representative women. Instead, reception and sole legitimization is given to the radical group, National Organization of Women, (N.O.W.).

Though the Bible contends that we are all born equal, egalitarians claim that everyone is equally good even after years of misbehavior proves differently. In order to maintain this facade of everyone being equally good or equally endowed, a welfare-state must equivalize values, make just about everything relative, find a host of excuses for things that should not be excused. Perhaps that is why, as recent statistics suggest, we have so many criminals, young people and others in our society who don't feel remorse for their actions, so many in the dark as to what is right and what is, actually, wrong.

The Bible, however, construes many values as absolute —not relative. "Thou shalt not" is one of the most recurring phrases in the Bible. The welfare-state's most frequent axiom is: "I have a right to ... I am entitled to."

But after a while, the belief that one has — through revenues from other people's wages—"rights" to 365 days of food, housing, and even another's well-earned job or promotion (affirmative action)—such inculcation leads, in some, to a feeling of entitlement to other people's property, indeed to their bodies. Consequently, in the Central Park case, we witness a mother of an accused, after her son's finger-printing, non-chalantly, bereft of remorse, remark "Can I take my son home now?," as if nothing unusual had just been perpetrated. Or we hear, as seen on T.V., neighborhood allies (adults) suggest that "since the boys didn't

pre-plan this incident, the boys should be left alone so that they can now go on with their young lives."

The proposed day-care legislation is yet another example of how a category in our lives will be co-opted for the advancement of welfare-state relativism. As presently constructed by some members of Congress, it would tax individuals in order to support government sponsored day-care centers only, while disenfranchising synagogue and church centers. Using the ubiquitous and ever-successful weapon of separation of church and state, children who were successfully nurtured by value-oriented religious day-care centers will be forced, because of economic reasons, to enter government-sponsored centers which, under the centralized bureaucracy, will teach the standard repertoire of left-liberalism.

A better way would be to offer tax-credits or vouchers to parents with toddlers, so that *parents* can decide who will influence their children, so that *parents* can choose who will shape their youngsters' minds. By steering children into non-religious centers only, government is saying that more than parents, it—the State—will decide what is best, what is allowable for one's child. Government is also saying that only those mothers willing to have their children secularized may receive assistance, hold a job, and help the family's economic situation. Pervertedly, government will help the mother who bears children out-of-wedlock (through A.D.C.) but not the religiously observant mother who bears children within marriage and wants either to work or raise her children at home.

Unlike elementary and secondary parochial schools where, indeed, intensive religious creeds and observances are taught, in synagogue and church day-care centers religious instruction is very minimal, indeed peripheral. They basically aim at providing a wholesome, friendly atmosphere. To proscribe any link between them and the citizens *qua* taxpayers would send the untenable message that even non-religious good works of religious institutions are unworthy of support, that government frowns on any contact between religious bodies and youngsters, that,

effectively, church and synagogue are outside the legal mainstream.

Legislation which steers children away from religious centers, penalizes churches, synagogues and religious mothers, and commits the state to a national *loco parentis* is very alarming. It is alarming not only for the reasons just mentioned but because, under the administration of the bureaucracies subsidized by tax dollars, day-care centers will be used by the liberal-left to (1) erase the ethic of individuality and particularity in favor of the ethic of collectivism and egalitarianism, (2) denigrade nativism in favor of universalism, (3) teach relativism and secular humanism, (4) wrest away the rights and importance of individuals, parents, and neighborhoods and churches towards a banal statism, and not, may I add, a patriotic one. Thus will many egalitarians, I believe, fight hard to defeat a tax-credit or voucher system which would give equal power to the synagogues and churches in forming the minds of America's youngsters.

Unfortunately, welfare-state egalitarianism has already succeeded in coloring our whole foreign policy. We seem to be able to abide across-the-board, total repression of complete societies, such as Nicaragua and the Soviet Union, while we pound countries where the overall population is much freer albeit one segment is treated better than the other. For, in the eyes of the egalitarian, an imperfect democracy is worse than a totalitarian "people's" socialism. Voter disenfranchisement is worse than Gulag; Botha was evil incarnate while Brezhnev and Mao were consistently accorded statesman status. Truly, it is difficult for a welfare-state advocate to be ired over countries who, themselves, are "experimenting" with the welfare-state's successor, socialism.

By, again, using relativism, socialist atrocities are equivalized to American actions. Have we forgotten how the Soviet purge in Afghanistan was, a decade ago, characterized by liberals as an equivalent of the American intervention in Grenada, and the K.G.B. to the C.I.A? This process of *moral reductionism* has already bred tragic con-

sequences, even on the domestic level, namely: the inability by so many in our society to distinguish between good and bad, the atrocious and the trivial.

Tax reform for family survival

BY MICHAEL SCHWARTZ

American demographic statistics over the past generation point up a strange paradox. Birth rates in general have been the lowest in history—below the replacement level ever since 1972. Married women of all age groups are having fewer children than in any previous generation. Yet the rate of out-of-wedlock births is increasing. The absolute number of out-of-wedlock births doubled between 1972 and 1986, and as a proportion of all births, out-of-wedlock births grew from about one-eighth to almost one-fourth. Unmarried women, especially young unmarried women, are the only ones in America who are having more babies than in the past.

The overwhelming majority of these unmarried mothers are poor. Their children, born and raised in impoverished households with no father, suffer not only material deprivation, but the psycho-social effects of an absence of normal family life.

This is a problem that most severely affects black Americans, as five out of every eight black women who give birth are unmarried. But it is not simply a minority problem. In fact, among whites the rate of out-of-wedlock childbearing is increasing so rapidly that whites now account for a majority of non-marital births, and one in six white babies is born to an unmarried mother.

Nothing illustrates the collapse of the family as an institution more dramatically than this phenomenon of

burgeoning illegitimacy. The most immediate and obvious social and biological purpose of marriage is the procreation and rearing of children. Yet a large and growing proportion of the children in our society are born and raised outside this structure, while married couples are having fewer and fewer children.

For the poor, marriage has become an irrelevant luxury, and is disappearing as an institution. Among the middle classes, marriage is still the norm, but childbearing is widely perceived as a luxury which most couples cannot afford to indulge in more than once or twice in a lifetime. Down this path lies the extinction of society.

This shifting pattern of marital and non-marital births is only one indication of the drastic erosion of the strength of the family as a social institution. It is cited here simply because it is such a striking illustration of the problem, but the breakdown of the family is apparent from any number of other symptoms. Rising levels of divorce and family violence, the high incidence of substance abuse and emotional disturbance among children, the shift of custodial authority from parents to public institutions, the increased dependence of women and children on government services, and a host of other signs all point in the same direction: the family is no longer capable of providing the social stability and emotional security it once did. And where the family is weakened, society is weakened.

The crippling of the family as an institution is certainly attributable more to moral and cultural factors than to economic conditions. The family survived unscathed through such upheavals as immigration, war and depression. It could not survive the sexual revolution, feminism and the "me generation." Public policy can do little directly to reshape the moral/cultural influences that have battered the family. But public policy is not powerless to reshape the environment for families.

What public policy can do is to erect a network of incentives that rewards virtue and restrains vice, that guides people toward choices and patterns of behavior

that are beneficial for themselves and society. It is, in fact, the case that public policy has—presumably inadvertently—built a network of incentives that has contributed to the breakdown of families over the past generation.

Among the poor, welfare policies have had a major impact on families. As George Gilder has noted, the welfare state tends to replace husbands as providers for women and children, rendering men redundant. Out-of-wedlock childbearing among the poor brings some immediate rewards in the form of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, housing and medical benefits, food stamps and all the other provisions of the Great Society that keep women and their children from destitution. Men of low socio-economic status have a hard time competing with the government as a provider. After a generation of this competition, it is clear that they are losing. The women in their social milieu are finding the welfare state to be a more reliable, relatively trouble-free source of subsistence. Having another child will probably not lower the standard of living for what is euphemistically called a "single parent." But getting married will probably not raise her standard of living. Not surprisingly, large numbers of women in these circumstances have decided to forego marriage while continuing to have children. In this way, public policy has inadvertently subsidized out-of-wedlock childbearing.

Among the middle classes, taxation has been a major factor contributing to changing behavior. The effective tax rates for single people and couples without children have remained fairly stable over the past generation, despite massive inflation and large increases in the overall levels of taxation. It is upon families with children that the burden of increased taxation has fallen most heavily, and the more children a family has, the greater has been the increase in its effective tax rate.

Middle class families are not generally faced with the prospect of destitution as the cost of an additional child. What they risk losing is their upward mobility. The additional cost of a second or third child in a family may well

mean putting off the hope of buying a home, moving to a better neighborhood, or any number of other legitimate aspirations such families may have. So, while continuing to marry, middle class Americans tend to forego childbearing. In this way, public policy has inadvertently penalized legitimate childbearing.

As a consequence, an ever-smaller proportion of children are born and raised in stable families, while an ever-growing proportion of children are born and raised in socially disorganized and personally debilitating family fragments. With every passing year this problem becomes markedly worse, and already it is reaching a critical point. When a sizeable segment of the community has no first-hand knowledge of normal family life, it becomes impossible to expect a restoration of the family.

Ensuring the economic vitality of families as families must become a major priority for conservatives. It is not sufficient to favor policies that are conducive to economic expansion and leave it at that. As we have seen, even at a time when the standard indices of economic prosperity have been going up, the family has suffered enormous setbacks, and there has been a significant economic dimension to this anti-family trend.

The conservative economic agenda has generally failed to take account of the central importance of the family as a social institution. Meanwhile, the conservative social agenda has been mainly preoccupied with questions of direct moral/cultural importance (abortion, pornography, school prayer, the ERA, etc.), but has failed to recognize that strong family life requires a secure economic foundation. Worse still, conservatives who have been most interested in economic issues and those who have been most interested in social issues have tended to pursue their objectives in near-abstraction from one another, because they have not shared a common vision.

Tax policy is the ideal arena for establishing the linkage between a conservative economic vision and a conservative social vision. The way in which taxes are levied has a material bearing on the choices people make and the pat-

terns of life they adopt. It is axiomatic that "you get more of what you subsidize and less of what you tax." And it is evident that our tax code and welfare policies over the past generation have subsidized out-of-wedlock births and penalized marital births, subsidized cohabitation and penalized marriage, subsidized labor force participation of mothers and penalized full-time homemaking. Reversing the vectors of those incentives must become the major domestic policy priority for conservatives.

A pro-family tax policy needs to be based on certain principles:

a) that marriage is to be preferred to the unmarried state;

b) that children should become, as far as possible, economic assets instead of liabilities for married couples, and parenthood recognized and rewarded as socially beneficial;

c) that the full-time work of the head of a family should be rewarded with sufficient income to maintain his or her family at a decent living standard;

d) that savings for the purchase of a home, education and other major family expenses should be encouraged.

With these objectives in mind, it is possible to propose a set of specific reforms which are deliberately designed to provide tax advantages to families. They will help to rehabilitate marriage among the poor by enhancing the marginal economic value of work, as against welfare dependency, and by restoring to men of low socio-economic status the possibility of supporting a family through work. They will help rehabilitate childbearing among the middle classes by reducing the marginal financial burden of raising additional children.

The following reforms can rebuild that pro-family economic climate.

1. *Increase the personal exemption for dependents.* The 1948 tax code provided a personal exemption of $600 per dependent. This represented one-fifth of the earnings of the average full-time worker. As a result, most workers sup-

porting a family had no federal income tax liability. They were able to purchase homes, put away savings, meet emergencies and, in general, get ahead.

Inflation, especially in the post-Vietnam era, diminished the real value of this exemption almost to the vanishing point. It was increased slightly on a few occasions, but not nearly enough to compensate for the drastic reduction in its value. One of the salutary features of the 1986 tax reform compromise was the virtual doubling of the personal exemption to $2000, with indexing to compensate for future inflation.

Yet the current exemption of $2000 represents only about one-fifteenth of the earnings of the average worker. That same hypothetical median-income worker with three children, who had no tax liability in 1948, now pays about 10 percent of his total earnings in income tax. And since his marginal tax rate is 15 percent, the actual cash value of the current exemption for each dependent child is only $300—barely enough to support a child for one month, let alone a year. The more dependents a worker has, the farther behind he falls.

The exemption for dependents should be raised to the full proportional equivalent of its 1948 value, $6000. At a 15 percent marginal rate, this tripling of the exemption will increase the after-tax earnings of workers by $900 a year instead of the current $300 for each dependent. Most heads of families will have little or no tax liability.

At a minimum, the dependent exemption should be increased for dependent children under 18, since children are ordinarily incapable, by virtue of their age, from becoming self-supporting. It would also, and for similar reasons, be reasonable to increase the exemption for adult dependents who are disabled or over age 65. It is worth considering a similar increase in the exemption for dependent spouses who are not gainfully employed.

This would have the effect of increasing the after-tax income of an intact, single-income couple by $600 annually, as compared with the present tax structure. The justification for this tax benefit is that the labor of full-time

homemakers is not compensated by any labor market mechanism, even though it has great social value. When families voluntarily forego the opportunity to enhance their income by the addition of a second income stream, they are sacrificing a higher material standard of living for less tangible but socially important goods, especially the full-time care of children. This not only eases the burden on those extra-familial institutions which must provide surrogate parent services, but also produces the long-term benefits of more stable family life and superior physical, emotional and mental development of children.

Meanwhile, the personal exemption for working people should remain at its current $2000 level. Employed persons are evidently capable of supporting themselves. They are not dependent on the earnings of others, and the current exemption satisfactorily protects workers from impoverishment. Any full-time worker earning even the minimum wage has sufficient after-tax income to stay well above the poverty level.

This reform will give those workers who are supporting dependents a relative advantage over those who are not, without affecting their ability to compete in the labor market.

This will have a major practical impact. Imagine two men working at the same job, each earning $30,000. One is single while the other is married with two children. The single worker now pays about $4660 in income tax, while his married co-worker pays about $2550. The tax code now allows a married head of a family an additional $2100 to provide for his dependents. But with the exemption for dependents increased, that worker will pay only $750 in taxes, leaving a margin of $3900 extra for his family responsibilities.

An additional wrinkle on the dependent exemption is that it should be doubled for the single year in which a new member is added to a family by birth or adoption. Adding an additional child to a family is an expensive proposition. It entails not only direct and immediate costs for medical care, food, clothing and furniture, but also

potential lost earning power by the mother. At a certain point, it will eventually mean finding a new, larger place to live. In any event, it places a strain on the family budget, and it is appropriate for the federal government to help families by offering them an additional tax break to help make the adjustment.

2. *Increase the standard deduction for married couples filing jointly.* Currently, that standard deduction is $5000, and it is claimed by most lower-income taxpayers (i.e., by most young families). But the standard deduction for a single person is $3000, and the standard deduction for a "head of household"—an unmarried taxpayer with one or more dependents—is $4400.

According to the current policy, an unmarried couple living together can take a combined $6000 in standard deductions. If they have a child out of wedlock, they can claim a total of $7400. If they get married, their standard deduction drops to $5000, and they lose $360 a year in tax breaks.

The answer is to set the standard deduction for married couple higher than the combined standard deductions for a single person and a "head of household." A standard deduction of $8000 will provide an annual incentive of $300 for couples to marry instead of cohabiting. Current tax policy would penalize that same couple by costing them $150 more in income tax if they marry.

3. *Reduce the Social Security tax rate for workers supporting dependent children.* The future of the Social Security system is notoriously precarious because of the enormous number of "baby boom" workers who will be reaching retirement age in the early part of the next century. There are only two ways to protect the security of these retirees: either raise Social Security taxes, which are already crushingly heavy, or increase the number of workers who will be contributing to the system a generation from now. This, in fact, is a problem directly traceable to the depressed birth rates among middle class families.

Workers who are currently supporting children are contributing to the future stability of Social Security in two

ways, through their taxes and by raising children who will become future contributors to the system. Those who are childless contribute only taxes. In their retirement, they will be supported out of the taxes paid by the children of their neighbors. They will benefit in the future from the sacrifices made today by their co-workers with children.

Those sacrifices are substantial. The Social Security tax has increased so steeply that most workers with children now pay more in Social Security than they do in income tax. Back in 1948, when the tax rate was just 1 percent and was assessed only on the first $3000 earned (the median income at the time), the most anyone paid for Social Security was $30 a year. At that rate, it was possible to regard the Social Security tax as an insurance premium. But that is simply absurd today, when Social Security takes away one out of every seven dollars earned by most workers. This is a tax, and a particularly heavy and inequitable one. Indeed, the increases in the Social Security tax have been the single greatest factor in eliminating the tax advantage for families built into the 1948 tax code.

It is a tax with no exemptions, assessed from the first dollar earned. Half of it is a hidden tax, paid immediately by the employer but attributed to labor costs, so that it holds nominal wages down. The poor pay it at the identical rate as the middle classes. But poor and middle-class workers pay a *higher* rate than high-income workers, because the tax is not assessed on earnings above $51,300.

A simple and equitable solution to this anomaly, and one which will be of great benefit to families, is to reduce each worker's Social Security tax rate by one percent per dependent child, on both the employer and the employee share. This will still leave enough in current receipts to enable the Social Security Trust Fund to meet its obligations. Yet it will dramatically help families as well as help ensure the future of the system.

In the first place, the take-home pay of heads of families will increase by one percent of his or her nominal wages for each dependent child. This, in itself, is a real bonus, increasing the disposable income of even modest wage

earners by several hundred dollars a year. Moreover, by providing an identical savings to the employer, this reform will also give parents a substantial competitive edge in the labor market. If an employer can save several hundred dollars a year by employing a worker with children, then such workers will be far less likely to be laid off and more likely to get promotions than their childless competitors.

All else being equal, it is better social policy for the parents of children to be shielded from unemployment and underemployment, because that means children are less likely to suffer the negative consequences of poverty. This reform will attain that objective without upsetting market forces in employment and without producing the marginal unemployment and inflation that result from increases in the minimum wage.

This reform will shift about $35 billion from the Social Security Trust account (whose annual surpluses are currently greater than that, leaving the Social Security system in the black) into the private sector, half to families and half to businesses. Like any tax cut, this will stimulate economic growth and create more jobs. Because it is particularly advantageous to families with children, it will reduce the demand for tax-funded social services. Because it reduces a labor-related expense for employers, it will probably tend to increase real wage levels, which is an urgent necessity for the lower middle class.

Over the past fifteen years, the real wages of men under 35 and of men with no more than a high school education have fallen by nearly 15 percent. This decline in real wage levels, combined with the higher tax burden heads of families have shouldered, has made it very difficult for men in these groups to support their families. The necessity for additional income among the young and among the working classes has been a major driving force in the increase of workforce participation by mothers. The higher workforce participation rates of mothers, in turn, has contributed to depressing the real wage rates of their husbands and imposed on families additional costs for child

care. Thus, a vicious cycle is created, making it ever more difficult for working couples to afford to have children.

In the long run, this reform will probably pay for itself by contributing to an increase in fertility. For each child, from birth to age 18, at an average of $300 per year from the parent/employee and from the employer, the revenue reduction to the Social Security system will be $10,800. Yet the average worker, in a 40-year work life at $30,000 a year earns $1.2 million and contributes more than $180,000 to Social Security. If the birth rate were to increase by just 6 percent as a consequence of pro-family tax policies, the system would break even. This is not at all unlikely if more working men are able to support their families on a single income, because there is a substantial difference in the fertility of married women who are in the labor force and those who are not.

4. *Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit on the basis of family size.* The earned income tax credit is available to workers with dependent children whose earnings are below $20,000. It is the only refundable tax credit currently available to individual taxpayers, and it rests on a very solid premise: that it is foolish to collect taxes from people and then turn around and give them tax-paid benefits. It provides an incentive for getting off welfare and for becoming self-supporting, and it helps low-income families keep their heads above water.

The problem with the EITC is that it provides exactly the same benefit for all families at a specified income level, regardless of how many children are in that family. The EITC should properly be viewed as the alternative to AFDC. For a family head who cannot get a good-paying job, there are two ways of supporting his or her children: work and welfare. Under the rules of the welfare system, the more children you have, the larger your check is. The same should be true for those who work.

The maximum EITC benefit is about $1000. It makes sense to increase the percentage at which the credit accrues for families with more than one child, and to reduce the phase-out rate for larger families. This gives parents a

stronger incentive to get off welfare and into a job, and helps even a low-level job provide an income sufficient to support a family. Such indexing will make the EITC, frankly, an income supplement, but at least it is one that helps families go in the right direction instead of miring them in long-term dependency.

One way in which this can be structured is to leave the system alone for one-child families, with the credit accruing at the rate of 14 percent on the first $7,143 earned, then phasing out at the rate of 10 percent per additional $1000 earned over $10,000. For a two-child family, the accrual rate can be raised to 21 percent, yielding a maximum credit of $1500, phasing out at a rate of 8 percent ($120) per additional $1000, so that the credit is not eliminated until family income reaches $22,333. For families with three or more children, the accrual rate should be 28 percent, for a maximum credit of $2000, with a phase out rate of 7 percent ($140) per additional $1000, reaching zero at an income level of $24,286. An additional step for four-child families, with an accrual rate of 35 percent, a maximum credit of $2500, a phase-out rate of 6 percent ($150) and a zero point of $26,667, is also feasible. An indefinite continuation of this indexing structure is not practicable because the reduction in the phase-out rate is asymptotic, but a four-step indexing will satisfactorily ensure that nearly all low-income workers will be better able to support their families.

Since virtually every family qualifying for this credit would be exempt from income tax liability as a consequence of an increase in the dependent exemption, this would not impose prohibitive marginal tax rates on low-income workers. However, this expansion, by itself, would still tend to discourage marriage and leave prospective husbands unable to compete with the welfare/tax benefits unmarried mothers can receive on their own. Therefore, only married couples should be eligible for the *expanded* EITC. This places single mothers at no disadvantage relative to their present treatment under the tax laws, since they would still qualify for the EITC at its current pone-

child level. But it does create a new and potentially significant economic incentive for marriage, and improves the chances of undereducated and underskilled men to earn a living wage for a family.

5. *Provide refundable universal child care credits.* Every family with preschool children should be eligible for a tax credit to help pay the cost of caring for those children. The families should be free to decide whether they want their children cared for at home or by some substitute for the parents.

The credit should be, as President Bush proposed during the 1988 election campaign, $1000 per child for lower-income families, accruing with earned income just as the earned income tax credit does. But it should be extended up the income brackets, at a declining rate, so it is available for all children in middle-income households as well. The phase-out rate proposed in the bill submitted in the 101st Congress by Reps. Clyde Holloway (R-La.) and Richard Schulze (R-Pa.) included a phase-out rate of just 1.5 percent ($15) per additional $1000 earned over $10,000, up to the $50,000 income level, at which point the credit still has a value of $400 per child. At incomes above $50,000, the phase-out rate is accelerated to 4 percent ($40) per additional $1000, reaching zero at an income of $60,000.

This credit should replace the current dependent care credit, which provides credit only as a percentage of expenses paid to outside child care providers to enable a mother to be gainfully employed. The current dependent care credit is inequitable, in that it represents a net transfer of wealth from the less affluent to the more affluent, and it unjustly penalizes families which care for their own children for the benefit of those who hire paid caretakers. This reform will have the effect of taking away a tax break worth up to $480 for families earning more than $60,000; but it is difficult to justify taking money from less affluent taxpayers to subsidize the child care costs of families earning this much. Families with incomes between $45,000 and $60,000 may receive smaller tax credits under this

reform. Every family earning less than $45,000, however, will benefit from this reform, even if they are currently claiming the maximum credit. More importantly, this reform will end the discrimination against families which make economic sacrifices to care for their own children.

6. *Restore deductibility of family-related expenses.* One of the ways in which the drafters of the 1986 tax reform managed to lower marginal rates without reducing income tax revenues was to "broaden the tax base," that is, to make more dollars taxable by eliminating or reducing deductibility. This was widely hailed as a matter of "closing loopholes" that let the rich get off without paying taxes. In reality, this "base broadening" probably cost most middle-class families as much as the increase in the personal exemption saved them.

Among the heaviest blows to families were the phasing out of the deductibility of personal interest payments and the increase in the minimum before medical expenses become deductible. Unreimbursed medical expenses now have to amount to 7.5 percent of the gross income, instead of 5 percent, before any deduction is allowed. This is so rare that the deduction applies, in practice, only to exceptionally costly catastrophic illnesses. Nonetheless, families with children tend to have fairly high medical bills, given the relatively high incidence of childhood illness and injury. But even families which itemize deductions will almost never accumulate enough in unreimbursed expenses to meet the new threshold.

Instead of being raised, the floor on deductible medical expenses should be lowered to 1 percent. For virtually any family, this is a substantial amount of money, and the deductibility of expenses over this amount will be particularly helpful to families with limited insurance coverage. In addition, the cost of medical insurance for children should be made deductible

Consumer interest also tends to fall most heavily on families. Before the 1986 reform, 65 percent of personal interest was deductible, but that was phased out under the new law. A return to the old standard would be a

reasonable form of relief for families, since families tend to be particularly dependent on consumer credit for major household purchases.

Mortgage interest is still fully deductible, and this is of vital importance to families. However, the reduction in marginal rates tended to reduce the actual value of this deduction for many middle-class families. (Ironically, however, mortgage interest on a second home—surely a luxury by most standards—remains fully deductible, even though formerly deductible expenses for what most families would regard as necessities have been dismissed as "loopholes.") While the lower marginal tax rates are helpful for middle-class families, the reduced cash value of the mortgage interest deduction offers a good reason to restore the consumer interest deduction.

Above all, the old rule of deductibility for charitable expenses ought to be restored. Before the 1986 reform, even those taxpayers who did not itemize deductions—generally speaking, those with lower incomes—were permitted to claim a deduction for charitable contributions in addition to the standard deduction. That, too, was eliminated as a "loophole." This change was directly aimed at increasing taxation of the less affluent, and it penalizes behavior which ought generally to be encouraged, namely, donations for charitable purposes.

In addition, this is counter-productive social policy. Private sector charities provide social services at lower cost and more effectively than government. That would seem to be the point of President Bush's memorable rhetoric about "a thousand points of light." Yet this change in the tax law is exactly the kind of thing that turns those lights off. When charitable contributions were deductible for everyone, society received the benefit of better social services for the very modest investment of a tax break for lower-income taxpayers. And that was a very good investment, paying off better than six dollars in services for every dollar invested in the deduction, assuming that most non-itemizers are in the 15 percent bracket. It is hard to see in this "reform" anything more than a desperate scramble

for a few million extra dollars in revenue to achieve some chimerical "revenue neutrality" on a balance sheet.

"Revenue neutrality" is not something that conservatives should hold up as a desideratum. In one of his televised debates with President Carter in 1980, Ronald Reagan made the point that the only way to reduce government expenditures is "to cut the government's allowance." That is as true today as it was then. The liberals understand that they must never pass up an opportunity to increase government expenditures, so that tax increases will become "necessary." Conservatives ought to understand that they should be at least as aggressive in seeking tax cuts, in order to make reductions in expenditures "necessary."

In addition to these restorations of diminished or abolished deductions, some new deductions should be introduced. An obvious candidate for deductibility is expenses for the elementary and secondary education of children. If a public purpose is served by having professional persons invest in continuing education for themselves to sharpen their professional skills, then *a fortiori* the public derives a benefit from the investment families make in the basic education of their children. Indeed, this is one of the most costly enterprises in which government is engaged, and when parents contribute to that same purpose, they save the public an immense amount of money.

7. *Expand the concept of tax-sheltered savings accounts.*

The individual retirement account (IRA) has been one of the most constructive and most popular innovations in tax law in the past forty years. It has not only stimulated savings, but, more importantly, given millions of Americans a greater sense of security for their retirement. Particularly among younger Americans, who are highly skeptical of the future of the Social Security system, the IRA provides a hedge against destitution in old age.

The rules on IRAs, however, need to be made equitable. Currently, in a family in which one spouse is not employed in the labor force, the total combined contribution to the couple's IRAs is limited to $2,250 per year. But if both

spouses have income, they can contribute $2,000 each, or a combined $4,000. This is an unnecessary penalty imposed on full-time homemakers. The $2,250 per couple limit should be raised to $4,000.

In addition, the same device of tax-sheltered savings should be permissible for accounts set up for other special purposes. IRA-type accounts should be permitted for savings for home purchases and higher education for children.

The overall result of these reforms will be to shift more wealth to families, especially families with children. And this objective is not achieved by increasing the taxation of others, but rather by strategically placed tax cuts for families. This is good social policy. As Michael Novak long ago pointed out, "the family is the best Department of Health, Education and Welfare." No institution, public or private, can match the family in providing for the material, mental, emotional and social well-being of its members. Especially in the affective dimension, no bureaucracy can begin to compete with the family. Therefore, if society has a choice between investing a dollar in government services or a dollar in families, it will always be wiser to invest that dollar in the family. Strong families produce strong societies.

Government and private social services are not supposed to replace families as the primary providers of human needs. To attempt to do so would, in fact, be socially destructive. They are supposed to function as a "safety net," aiding those exceptional persons whose families are not capable of providing for them. This is a norm which can be restored only by restoring the economic strength of families and ending the insane policy of taxing families into dependency.

The reforms outlined here are not minor. They represent a significant reconceptualization of the nature of taxation for conservatives: the conscious and deliberate use of fiscal policy to achieve an objective of social policy, the strengthening of the family. This reconceptualization knits

together the conservative agenda, giving it a coherence which is lacking as long as "social issues" are considered in abstraction from economic issues.

Yet from a strictly economic standpoint, these proposed reforms are not really drastic. The actual amount of money which the Treasury will lose and families will gain represents an overall tax cut of well under ten percent. Yet for individual families, these tax cuts will make a major difference, adding a few hundred or a few thousand dollars of *disposable* income to their annual family budgets.

Following are some hypothetical examples of the effects of these reforms on some different families. In each of these examples it is assumed that the families do not itemize deductions and do not shelter any portion of their income in IRA or similar accounts. Thus, the reforms reflected in these charts include the increase in the standard deduction for married couples filing jointly; the increase in the exemption for dependents; the decrease in the Social Security tax rate; the universal child care credit; and, where applicable, the expanded earned income tax credit.

EXAMPLE 1

Middle-class family. Husband employed full-time, earns $40,000; wife employed during school year, earns $10,000. One child.

They are considering having a second child, which will necessitate the elimination of the mother's income. Under current tax law, this will cost the family slightly more than $6000 in after-tax earnings. The proposed reforms give the family an immediate advantage of $2760. The prospective loss of the mother's earnings next year will cost a net of just $2455 from their current after-tax income. Taking into account the employment-related expenses the mother now incurs, their standard of living might not be decreased at all.

	Current	Add'l Ch	Reform	Add'l Child
Gross earnings	$50,000	$40,000	$50,000	$40,000
Taxable earnings	39,000	27,000	32,000	16,000
Income tax	(7,280)	(4,050)	(5,320)	(2,400)
Social security	(3,825)	(3,060)	(3,425)	(2,260)
Child Care Credit	N/A	N/A	400	1,100
NET	38,895	32,890	41,655	36,440

EXAMPLE 2

Couple with three preschool children. Husband employed, earning $30,000. Wife is full-time homemaker. Reforms increase effective earnings of husband by more than 20 percent, enabling family to increase its living standard or savings significantly.

	Current	Reform
Gross earnings	$30,000	$30,000
Taxable earnings	15,000	-0
Income Tax	(2,250)	-0
Social Security	(2,295)	(1,395)
Child Care Credit	n/a	2,100
NET	$25,455	30,705

EXAMPLE 3

Childless married couple, both employed; combined earnings, $60,000.

	Current	Reform
Gross earnings	$60,000	$60,000
Taxable earnings	51,000	48,000
Income Tax	(10,640)	(9,800)
Social Security	(3,990)	(3,990)
NET	$45,370	$46,210

EXAMPLE 4

A man and woman live together and have two children, but they are not married. She earns $8000 a year; he earns

$12,000. They are considering marriage. Under current tax law, marrying will cost this couple $1000 a year. Under the proposed reform, their marriage will increase their combined after-tax income by $120. Whether they marry or not, the proposed reforms will increase their purchasing power by about $2000 over current levels.

Current	**She**	**He**	**Married**
Gross earnings	$8,000	$12,000	$20,000
Taxable earnings	-0-	7,000	7,000
Income Tax	-0-	(1,050)	(1,050)
EITC	1000	-0-	-0
Social Security	(612)	(918)	(1,530)
Child Care Credit	n/a	n/a	n/a
NET	8,388	10,032	17,420

Reform	**She**	**He**	**Married**
Gross	$8,000	$12,000	$20,000
Taxable	-0-	7,000	-0
Income Tax	-0-	(1,050)	-0
EITC	1,000	-0-	300
Soc Sec	(452)	(918)	(1,290)
CCTC	2,000	-0-	1,700
NET	10,548	10,032	20,710

Choice in education

BY WILLIAM C. MYERS

By almost any measure, the educational achievements of American students today are well below those of earlier generations. No discernible educational progress is being made at the national level, and measures of student achievement remain well below those of previous decades. Between 1963 and 1989, average scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Tests fell 77 points (from 980 to 903), and they have declined during each of the last four years. The proportion of high school juniors and seniors able to read at the more advanced levels required for professional and technical work has fallen steadily from 6.6 percent in 1971 to 4.8 percent in 1988.

The government-funded National Assessment of Education Progress exams, administered to high school students, indicate the parameters of America's educational decline. According to the NAEP tests, fewer than 10 percent of all 13 year-olds are "adept" at reading; less than 1 percent can be considered "advanced." Recent NAEP and similar tests also show:

> Only 53 percent of high school seniors knew it was Patrick Henry who said "Give me liberty or give me death," while just 43 percent could place World War I in the first half of the 20th century.
>
> Barely half of our 17-year-olds could calculate the area of a rectangle and just 47 percent could "express 9/100 as a percent."

> Almost two out of three of our oldest students could not locate Saudi Arabia on a map.

This dismal performance is among children who remain in school. School drop out rates are 25 percent nationwide and rise as high as 50 percent in some urban areas.

Not only is the American education system failing to educate students as well as it once did, it is also failing to prepare American students to compete in the world economy. International comparisons of student achievement indicate that the educational achievements of young Americans now trail the achievements of students in other developed nations.

> Eighth grade students in the U.S. placed next to last on a 1981 mathematics test administered to students from 12 developed democracies.

> A 1982 comparison of the best mathematics students in 11 nations placed American students dead last in calculus and algebra.

> A 1988 study by the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education found that American 13-year-olds failed to match the science or mathematics achievements of students in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain, Canada or South Korea.

The measure of American educational decline is not only evidenced by grim test results and international comparisons. An emerging body of evidence indicates that the failure of American education is beginning to have real world consequences on American business. The New York Telephone Company recently advertised for new positions. They received 117,000 applications. But of this legion of potential new workers, only 2,100 could pass the basic employment exam to qualify as mail clerks. This is not a highly technical position. It doesn't involve knowledge of electronics or telecommunications. The exam is essentially just a measure of literacy, yet only 2 percent of the tens of thousands who applied had this very basic skill.

Similarly, Motorola has found that only one out of every five job applicants nationally could pass their entry-level exam that requires seventh grade English and fifth grade math skills.

The decline in educational achievement has also affected worker productivity. According to one study, the decline in educational achievement since 1967 has reduced the quality and productivity of the American labor force by 2.9 percent, which, in turn, has reduced the U.S. gross national product by $87 billion. American educational decline has also caused U.S. business to reallocate $30 billion each year to train new employees in basic skills and bring them up to minimum educational standards.

High school graduates (to say nothing of the dropouts) are just not prepared to be informed citizens or productive workers. As Allan Bromley, President Bush's former science advisor, commented, the United States is in danger of becoming the "first fully industrialized third-world nation."

The decline in American educational performance has been recognized for at least 20 years. It was dramatically communicated to the public when the National Commission on Excellence in Education issued its report to the President in 1983. The title of that report said it all. It described the United States as, "A Nation at Risk."

This was no overstatement, and it prompted or reinforced a series of school "reforms" advocated by the public education establishment and designed to allocate more resources to our educational system. In just the last twenty years:

Real (inflation adjusted) government spending per student rose by more than 83 percent to $5,200 per child each year.

The average teacher salary rose from $8,560 (for nine months) to $29,567.

The student-teacher ratio fell from 22.3 to 17.6.

> The percentage of teachers with advanced degrees grew from fewer than 30 percent in 1971 to more than 53 percent in 1988.

Despite these "reforms," the performance of American education continued to decline throughout the 1980s. For the last twenty years, the American education establishment has pressed successfully for even greater levels of financial support for public education, and has delivered even fewer results with those resources.

The failure of education "reform" is confirmed by several recent studies of the American education system. One such survey, an analyses of 147 statistical indices of student performance by Dr. Eric Hanusek of Rochester University, found no consistent relationship between student performance and higher levels of government spending, greater teacher salaries, or smaller class sizes. Among his conclusions:

> "... differences in [school] quality do not seem to reflect variations in expenditure, class size, or other commonly measured attributes of schools and teachers."
>
> "Teacher experience appears to have only a marginal effect on improving quality education."
>
> "There appears to be no strong or systematic relationship between school expenditures and student performance."
>
> "... expenditures are unrelated to school performance *as schools are currently operated*." [emphasis added].

These conclusions are supported by more than a decade of research at the U.S. Department of Education. They are also backed by earlier effective schools research by James Coleman at the University of Chicago and Herbert Walberg at the University of Illinois. And they are confirmed by the seminal research of John Chubb of the Brookings Institution and Terry Moe of Stanford University, published in 1990 in *Politics, Markets, and America's School's.*

The Chubb-Moe research is based on a 10-year study of 500 schools and 20,000 principals, teachers and stu-

dents. Based on this unprecedented investigation, Chubb and Moe conclude that school reform efforts have failed because they have been attempted within a public school monopoly that stifles innovation and discourages risk-taking and experimentation. In this conclusion, Chubb and Moe are supported by Al Shanker, the President of the American Federation of Teachers, who urges "It is time to admit that public education operates like a planned economy, a bureaucratic system in which everybody's role is spelled out in advance, and there are few incentives for innovation and productivity."

Chubb and Moe conclude that school reform will be successful only if it embraces true market competition among schools, with parents choosing among both public and private school alternatives. U.S. Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos agreed, calling for a "fundamental restructuring" of education with educational choice serving as the "cornerstone."

Educational choice, the idea of permitting parents to choose the schools their children attend, is emerging as the centerpiece of a true education reform agenda for the 1990s. It is based on a simple premise: parents, more than any other adult, know and love their own children and want the best for them. This is why parents, and not bureaucrats, are in the best position to decide where their children should go to school.

Given choices, parents will not permit their children to remain in a school that is riddled by crime and drugs, that fails to impart basic skills, or that exists to provide jobs for adults instead of education for children.

Parents interact with their children one-on-one, over the long haul, longer than any teacher or administrator. Over time, parents can see the effects of education on their children, and when empowered with choices, parents are more likely than any other adult to make choices that are best for their children.

When parents are able to decide for themselves which school best meets their children's needs, they become

consumers in an education marketplace instead of mere clients of an education bureaucracy. This, in turn, makes them active participants in the education of their children. And parental involvement, as virtually every education observer agrees, is an indispensable element in the success of children. As Martin Luther King pointed out, the family is the "primary educating agency of mankind."

Giving parents the right to choose the schools their children attend makes schools compete for students. Competition has been called the "mainspring of human progress." When rewards are tied to good performance and penalties to poor performance, people try harder to succeed. The emphasis shifts from inputs to outcomes. Innovation is encouraged. Success is imitated. Failures are eliminated. There is a constant pressure to improve, not just to get along.

Moreover, the American people want choice. Educational choice is not a radical or risky reform. Over 70 percent of Americans polled support parental choice in schools.

Generally speaking, wherever choice initiatives have been tried, they have been popular and successful. The inclusion of parents in determining what schools their children are to attend, even within a very limited range of choices, has contributed to higher levels of parental involvement and community support of schools and has improved the quality of education.

Plans for implementing parental choice can be divided into four types, according to the breadth of choice offered.

Intra-District Open Enrollment.

The first, and most limited, is open enrollment within a particular school district. Parents can choose any public school in their home district, or in a limited number of districts. This is the parental choice plan in force in many school districts in Massachusetts and in East Harlem. It is relatively easy to administer, with no extraordinary added

transportation costs or complications of personnel management. It fosters intra-district competition among participating schools, thereby tending to improve the quality of education within the district.

In Massachusetts, the Cambridge school district initiated a "controlled choice" plan in the early 1980s for the purpose of achieving voluntary desegregation. Families were permitted to choose any school within the district, so long as the new patterns of voluntary school registration did not disturb the racial balance in each school. The experiment proved so successful that the enrollment of eligible children in the Cambridge public schools increased by 14%. During just the last seven years, SAT scores among students participating in this open-enrollment plan have increased 89 points. Several other Massachusetts school districts, including Boston, have implemented similar programs based on the Cambridge example.

Similarly, in New York, East Harlem School District #4 has won national recognition for its "schools of choice" program. Aiming at the goals of voluntary desegregation, improved quality and increased parental participation, the program has attracted students from more affluent sections of New York City to the East Harlem schools and appears to be highly successful. Average performance of students in this district went from 32nd out of 32 in New York City to 15th. Before the choice program began, only 15.4% of the students in the district could read at grade level. Recent test scores show 64% at or above grade level in reading and 53% at or above grade level in math. The number of students from the district who qualified for admission to one of New York's prestigious specialized high schools increased from 10 to 300, and today, 96 percent of East Harlem graduates are admitted to college.

State-Wide Open Enrollment.

The second type of choice, which Minnesota, Iowa, Arkansas, Nebraska, Ohio, Idaho and Utah are im-

plementing, allows the choice of any public school within the state of residence. This broader form of choice tends to equalize educational opportunity among students from school districts whose funding base is unequal. It enables students from smaller districts to take advantage of programs which their home districts cannot afford to offer. It stimulates inter-district competition for excellence, thereby providing a stronger incentive for educational improvement than a plan limited to intra-district choice.

Minnesota has perhaps the most ambitious educational choice program of this type in the nation. It has adopted a mandatory statewide open enrollment policy, which entitles students to transfer for any reason from their home district to any other district in the state, or from their present school to any other school in the district. Districts, however, have a right to refuse students either because of lack of space or in order to maintain racial balance. This latter factor has hampered some inter-district transfer requests. For example, of the 27 minority students from Minneapolis who applied for admission to a school in another district, all 27 requests were granted; but only 13 of the 113 white Minneapolis students applying for transfer were approved. State funding amounting to $3600 follows the student to the receiving school district.

The open enrollment policy appears to be working with reasonable success. For example, 85% of the 1989-90 kindergarten applicants in Minneapolis were admitted to their first choice school.

The popularity of the Minnesota program was a factor in leading the states of Arkansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Ohio, Idaho and Utah to enact choice plans during 1989 and 1990. Each is patterned to a lesser or greater extent on the Minnesota program.

A number of other states permit inter-district transfers in particular cases. Generally, this requires the approval of both the resident and the non-resident districts. A key distinction in these plans is whether state funding follows the child to the non-resident district. In Louisiana, for example, it does not; but in Maine and Washington it does.

In the former case, of course, there is a strong disincentive for any district to accept a non-resident student.

Colorado, like some other states, also has an open enrollment policy for high school drop-outs and, in Denver, a very successful "back to basics" magnet school where students have compiled impressive records on achievement tests.

The key element in either intra-district or state-wide open enrollment plans is that state education funding must follow the child between schools and districts. State funding must go to the school or district which actually provides the education for the child, rather than to the school or district of residence. This is an essential element for any plan aimed at implementing freedom of choice, because it offers the only tangible incentive for schools to compete for students.

Public-Private Educational Choice (Non-Sectarian).

A third category permits the choice of any public or non-sectarian private school. This system has been in place in Vermont for more than a century for secondary students living in districts too small to support secondary schools, and is now offered in some parts of Alaska. It offers a more expansive range of choices than any program limited to public schools, is even easier to administer than a public-school-only plan, and is cost efficient. At the same time, it achieves all the objectives of more restrictive, public-school-only plans. The mechanism for implementation of a plan of this type is a voucher or tuition reimbursement from the school district of residence or from the state.

The first, and so far most popular, program of this type is the post-secondary school enrollment option. Again, Minnesota pioneered this educational option, which permits qualified high school juniors and seniors to take college courses, receiving both high school and college credit for them. Students are permitted to enroll for courses at any college in the state—public or private, sectarian or non-sectarian—and the state transfers to the college that

state tax money which would have spent to educate the child in a public high school.

This is the first of the new educational choice programs which includes private educational opportunities, and it has attracted the greatest participation among students and has had the greatest effect on public schools. In Minnesota, several thousand students have exercised this option, 5700 in 1990 alone.

Perhaps the most significant benefit of Minnesota's post-secondary options program is that local school districts, faced with the potential loss of students seeking broader curriculum choices, began to enrich their course offerings. More language courses were adopted in many school districts; statewide, the number of Advanced Placement (AP) courses quadrupled since the program was launched in 1985; and the University of Minnesota is offering college-level courses at 24 high schools in 1990, up from one in 1985. So a program that, on its face, helped only the small minority of students who enrolled in courses outside their home schools turned out to be the stimulus for a general improvement in the public high schools as they competed to retain students and state funding.

Post-secondary options are available to high school juniors and seniors in some other states, but generally under strictly limited circumstances. In Florida, for example, students may take courses at local community colleges. Only Minnesota, Iowa and Colorado so far provide state funding for enrollment in courses at independent colleges.

Perhaps the most significant education reform of this type, however, was enacted this year in Wisconsin. During the spring of 1990, the Wisconsin legislature passed and Governor Tommy Thompson signed an education choice program under which students from low-income families in Milwaukee are permitted to attend any public or nonsectarian private school in Milwaukee County. The Milwaukee plan is limited; only about 1,000 poor children in Milwaukee are permitted to participate and the plan has

been successfully attacked in court on procedural grounds. However, while the courts consider Milwaukee's choice program, more than 400 disadvantaged students are exercising private school choice and the plan's sponsor promises to re-introduce it if the courts ultimately uphold the current technical challenge to it.

Complete Educational Choice.

Finally, a fourth category of educational choice would expand the range of choices to include any school, public or private, sectarian or non-sectarian, which satisfies the state's requirements for compulsory attendance. Such a plan would not only achieve more completely the objectives of more limited plans, but would also satisfy the needs of those families whose selection of a school is influenced by religious considerations. Such an educational choice program would also make more efficient use of available community resources; in many low-income urban areas, the only existing alternatives to sub-standard public schools are church-related schools.

The major objection to this model is that it might encounter constitutional objections. However, that fear would appear to be allayed by the 1983 Supreme Court decision in *Mueller v. Allen*, which held as constitutional a program of educational assistance that was generally available to students in public and private schools. Unfortunately, no state has adopted complete educational choice; today, this type of choice is available only to those parents who can afford to pay the tuition at sectarian schools.

The objectives sought by advocates of parental choice are even more diverse than the types of choice programs. They include improving the quality of education, promoting equality of educational opportunity, ending *de facto* segregation, increasing educational diversity, affirming the primacy of parental rights, advancing religious freedom, and reducing taxes.

Improving Educational Quality.

Most public schools have, in effect, a captive clientele which cannot transfer to another school without either paying a rather formidable tuition at a private school or changing residence to attend another public school. Under these circumstances, the motivation for improvement is minimal, driven only by the pride, abilities and dedication of the school's administration and faculty. Parents have relatively little influence on the operation of the school, and because of this, relatively little motivation to become actively involved in the education of their children. There are simply no perceived adverse consequences if a school is failing to perform adequately: it does not lose students or funding, because its clients have nowhere else to go.

This is a particularly severe problem in schools serving students from low income areas. In those situations, students tend to be less developed academically, behavioral problems tend to be greater, motivation of faculty and staff tends to be lower, and parents, lacking a sense of empowerment, tend to be less involved.

Yet even schools serving students from a more highly advantaged background will have an added incentive for excellence and a higher degree of parental cooperation when the students attend schools because of family choice rather than bureaucratic assignment. The studies of James Coleman and others, comparing the performance of public and private secondary schools, demonstrate that parental choice is the single most important factor—overcoming even socio-economic considerations — in creating an educational environment conducive to excellence.

Monopolies are notoriously incapable of self-initiated reform. In education, as in other aspects of human endeavor, choice and competition provide the key motivation for improvement.

Promoting Equality of Opportunity.

Currently, the quality of the public school which a student attends depends on the student's place of residence, which is closely related to his or her family's economic circumstances. The greatest gulf between successful schools and unsuccessful schools is not that between public and private schools, but that between impoverished urban public schools and affluent suburban public schools, often in adjoining districts. The expansion of parental choice, so that no student will be assigned arbitrarily to a school his or her parents find unsatisfactory, is perhaps the only way to ensure genuine equality of opportunity for all students.

Under such a system, every family will be responsible for selecting the school or schools their children attend, and therefore it can be assumed that parents will be satisfied with the schools they have chosen. If not, they can simply transfer their children to another school. This means that, on balance and considering the available options, each family will consider the school they have chosen to be the best. This will increase their motivation to become and remain actively involved in the education of their children and constantly to reassess the choices they have made.

Under these circumstances, schools which are failing to meet the needs of their patrons will be forced either to improve or to close, while those which are performing satisfactorily will have a constant incentive to continue improving. Schools which currently serve more affluent and more powerful patrons already have that incentive, at least implicitly, because dissatisfied parents have the means to transfer their children to private schools. A reform aimed at expanding parental choice will empower the less affluent and less powerful to exercise the same kind of quality control over the schools their children attend.

Ending *De Facto* Segregation.

One of the most contentious issues in education policy has been that of racial segregation and the various efforts to overcome it. Almost universally, the negative reactions to desegregation are attributable to the compulsory nature of the measures taken. There is a strong social consensus that students should not be assigned to schools on the basis of race and that exclusion from attendance at schools on the basis of race is unacceptable. Yet because of residential patterns, *de facto* racial segregation persists in many localities.

Under a system of parental choice, voluntary desegregation will be fostered because families of all races will have an equal opportunity to select schools of their choice. As long as racial discrimination in admissions is prohibited in any participating school, the existence of *de facto* segregation (e.g., in a neighborhood school in an all-black or all-white neighborhood) will not be a sign of injustice because each of the families will have chosen that educational environment and will have the freedom to choose another type of environment.

Obviously, this objective can be achieved only if all the participating schools in a particular parental-choice plan are barred from discriminating on the basis of race. It is well known that some private "segregation academies" have been established for the specific purpose of evading desegregation. Yet there is solid evidence that racially discriminatory policies in private schools are likely to be reversed in exchange for the extension of public benefits to the students in those schools. The Louisiana legislature has been one of the most generous in the nation in extending various benefits and services to the students of private schools, but only those students in schools which do not discriminate on the basis of race are eligible for such benefits. As a consequence, dozens of schools which had been established as "segregation academies" have

dropped their discriminatory policies in order to enable their students to share in those benefits.

Increasing Educational Diversity.

One of the chief benefits of a system of parental choice is that it will increase the diversity of schools and foster innovation. Currently, innovations such as open classrooms, non-graded learning, experimental curricula and so forth must be limited. Such experiments can encounter resistance from parents who do not want their children to be used as "guinea pigs," or they may have to be dropped before their value is effectively tested because of limited resources or the political obstacles of moving an educational bureaucracy. Public schools inevitably have to be institutions which reflect a consensus, and this necessity limits innovation. Yet with parental choice, educational innovations can receive a fair test, under conditions which foster parental co-operation.

One very good example is afforded by the Eugene, Oregon public school system. There, the superintendent has established a policy under which any group of 200 parents and five teachers are authorized to set up a school implementing the educational specialty of their choice. Seventeen such schools are currently in operation, ranging from intensive instruction in Japanese to alternative programs for high school dropouts. Over 3,000 students are enrolled in these parent-initiated schools.

The inclusion of private schools in a choice program offers even more scope to innovation and diversity. This is of particular significance with respect to questions of "values," the ethical and cultural premises which are inseparable from education. Many of the conflicts in education today are rooted in contention over ethical and cultural standards. A pluralism which facilitates a high degree of continuity between the beliefs and standards inculcated within families and those honored in school offers a healthy way to eliminate conflict and respect the diversity of the American people.

The benefits of a system which fosters diversity and innovation, so long as minimum state standards are maintained, are apparent, particularly in light of the fact that none of these innovations is imposed on a child, but freely chosen by their families.

Affirming Parental Rights.

The community has a right and duty to ensure that every child receives an education which adequately prepares him or her for citizenship. This is provided for by the compulsory attendance laws and by the minimum standards and core curriculum requirements which exist in every state. Beyond this, the policy in every state—a policy fully in keeping with the philosophy of democratic self-government—is to extend to parents as much freedom as possible. Yet, in practice, the range of parental freedom is severely limited, especially for those families who cannot afford private school tuition. The obvious way to make this theoretical freedom practical is to provide for a wider range of choices. The more schools parents are free to choose from, without suffering financial penalties, the greater their ability to exercise the freedom they possess in theory. From a philosophical perspective, this is plainly the most compelling argument in favor of parental choice in education: parents and not the state have a primacy of rights in the education of their children.

Advancing Religious Freedom.

Closely related to that point is the argument for choice on the basis of religious freedom. If parents have a right to select schools which conform to their own religious preferences, then their free exercise of religion is inhibited by the placing of financial obstacles to such a choice. Such obstacles are imposed when the community collects taxes for the education of all children, but disburses those funds for the education only of those children not in church-related schools. This argument would be invalid if the state

did not require that all children be educated. In that instance, the selection of a church-related school would be like any other discretionary purchase, and the patrons of such schools would have no just claim to share in public benefits. But since the law requires that all children be educated, and taxes all citizens for the accomplishment of that purpose, then it is unjust to deny the benefits of those tax funds to families who fulfill their legal obligation by patronizing a non-government school.

The traditional argument against this is that the non-establishment clause of the First Amendment bars the state from subsidizing a religious institution. This is a valid objection to the extent that it relates to the public funding of church-related schools. But if there is a general program of direct assistance to students in order to give those students a free choice of schools, it would constitute a form of invidious discrimination, unduly burdening the right to religious freedom, to deny equal participation in that program to students who attend church-related schools. A succession of Supreme Court decisions, from *Everson*[1] to *Mueller*[2], would support this interpretation. That theoretical consideration, combined with the practical observation that church-related schools are currently the most popular alternative to public schools (and in many places, the only alternative), indicate that any choice plan which extends beyond the public school system should include church-related schools.

Reducing Taxes.

The introduction of a parental choice plan which embraces non-public schools has the potential for making tax reduction possible while, at the same time, improving the quality of education.

Taxpayers bear the entire cost of educating a child in public school. Meanwhile, they pay little or none of the cost of educating a child in private school. Under a choice plan which enables parents to select private schools, taxpayers would contribute to the cost of the education of all

of the children in the state. This would appear, at first glance, to increase the burden on taxpayers. But while they would continue to be paying the full cost of education for each child in public school, they would be contributing only a specific, limited amount toward the cost of educating those students in private schools. Moreover, the increased access to private education will predictably produce a net shift of student enrollment away from public schools and towards private schools.

Any parental choice plan which includes private education will have to rely on a public subsidy which follows the student in some fashion—a voucher, a refundable tax credit, a state scholarship, or some such device. The size of this subsidy will influence the magnitude of the net shift in enrollment and the per-pupil savings which taxpayers will realize.

The larger the amount of the average subsidy, the greater the shift in net enrollment is likely to be, but at the same time, a greater shift will be necessary to cover its cost. A subsidy which is very small, such as the existing Minnesota and Iowa tax deductions which were upheld in *Mueller* and related cases, would require only a very tiny shift in enrollment to cover its cost. But these credits are actually too small to stimulate any shift in enrollment (Minnesota provides only about $25 per student; Iowa up to $50) and therefore increases the tax burden. On the other hand, a subsidy which is quite large would fall victim to the law of diminishing returns, and not produce an enrollment shift sufficient to cover its cost. Between these two extremes is a moderately-sized subsidy which would maximize freedom of choice while saving a substantial amount of money. This surplus could be used to increase the funding of public schools, turned to some other public purpose, or returned to the taxpayers through tax cuts.

Educational choice is not only a good theory. Choice works. And the proof of its success is not limited to statistics and SAT scores in pioneering states. Just ask Chris Schaefer.

Two years ago, Chris was ready to drop out of high school. He summed up his situation this way: "I was in a state of educational depression I thought I was dumb. My teachers thought I was lazy."

In most places, Chris would have had only two choices —stay in a school that was clearly not meeting his needs or drop out. But Chris was lucky. He lives in Minnesota, and in Minnesota, Chris had other choices.

Under Minnesota's public school choice plan, Chris transferred to a new school that was set up to help young people work out their educational problems. The new school worked and in November 1989, Chris graduated from high school.

Chris credits his accomplishment to the choices he had in Minnesota: "As I look back on the last two years of my educational career, I can sincerely say I believe them to be the turning point of my life." Armed with his high school diploma, Chris has now chosen to serve his nation, enlisting in the United States Navy where he hopes to continue his education and become a radio technician.

Chris is an American success story. And his success is due in large part to his ability to choose a school that met his particular needs.

NOTES

1. *Everson v. Board of Education*, 330 U.S. 1, 67 S. Ct. 504, 91 L.Ed. 711 (1947).

2. *Mueller v. Allen*, 463 U.S. 388, 103 S. Ct. 3062, 77 L.Ed. 2d 721 (1983).

Opportunity for higher education: A new approach

BY PATRICK F. TAYLOR

My home state of Louisiana ranks near the top in all the wrong categories. We have the highest unemployment rate and among the highest levels of adult illiteracy, welfare payments and prison population.

Perhaps where the need is greatest, the solution will be found. Therefore, it should not surprise anyone to see Louisiana taking a bold new initiative that could vastly improve our system of public education, extend true equality of opportunity to our people, and make our society far more productive and competitive.

In March, 1988 I offered 221 disadvantaged, underachieving, mostly black students at a typical inner-city school in New Orleans the chance to go to college. Their experience points the way to the reforms I'm going to describe. My involvement with those kids has also profoundly changed my own life and my view of things.

Like many Americans, I had always believed that ours is an open society, that all of us can achieve our full potential by virtue of hard work and initiative, that the only limitations are those we place on ourselves. The circumstances of my life only helped to confirm those beliefs.

I was born poor, in East Texas, in the middle of the Great Depression. Growing up near the historic oil discovery at Spindletop, I listened to the stories and I read everything I could about the careers of early wildcatters. My dream

was to become like them, to become a big-time oilman myself.

My family moved to Houston, where I won an open competition for a scholarship to the Kinkaid School, one of the top private schools in the city. Then, at age sixteen, I was forced to leave home. I was on my own with 35 cents in my pocket and whatever belongings I could cram into a single suitcase. I had great expectations, but minimal prospects.

I worked in a cafeteria (I can't remember a time in my life when I didn't have a job), lived in a furnished room, and completed my studies at Kinkaid. I knew I needed far more education to realize my ambition. So I made a survey of the successful oilmen I admired in Houston. I found out that Louisiana State University, in far-off Baton Rouge, offered what I wanted so desperately — a degree in petroleum engineering — and that, more importantly, it was also the least expensive major university in the country.

In 1955, when I registered for my freshman year at LSU, tuition, room and board was $205 per semester. Even so, I didn't have all the money. So the school let me sign a note! Will it ever be that simple again?

I had come from Texas a poor boy seeking an education, and a great public university offered me the opportunity of a lifetime. I graduated, made my home in Louisiana, and there founded my company, which today is one of the largest and most profitable independent oil and gas concerns in the United States.

My great expectations have been realized because I was lucky enough to go to college, the first in my family to do so. I have tried to repay the debt, to show my gratitude, by helping other young people to achieve their goals. In 1986 I received the Horatio Alger Award, and since that time I have travelled around the country making motivational speeches to high school juniors and seniors and awarding Horatio Alger scholarships. I have enjoyed the experience thoroughly, but it did not prepare me for my first encounter last March with the seventh and eighth grade

"transitional classes" at the Edward M. Livingston Middle School in New Orleans.

I had accepted an invitation to give a role model talk at the school. My first inclination was to dust off and deliver my standard Horatio Alger pep talk, until my staff warned me that these kids were *different*. They were Horatio Alger material only in that they were disadvantaged. I learned that "transitional class" was a code word for failure, a device the public schools use to gather together the chronic underachievers. I learned that most of my audience was not expected to enter high school, let alone finish the full four years. They were ordained to be a burden on society. Something more had to be done.

I arrived at Livingston Middle School that day in full role model regalia—gold Rolex watch, jewelry, boots—all the trappings of my immense good fortune. I told them about my oil and gas fields in the Gulf, airplanes, helicopters, race boats, and cattle ranches in two states. I made sure they saw and heard.

I also talked about my childhood, about growing up poor, being alone, and going hungry at times. I told them the only certain advantage I had in East Texas 50 years ago was to be born male and white.

Then I spoke to them about college. How many had parents who had gone to college? There was no response. How many of them would like to go to college? Every hand shot up; they did in fact know the value of education.

So I offered them a deal: If they would maintain a "B" average, complete a core curriculum of 17.5 credit hours of academic study, and stay away from drugs and crime, I would see to it that they went to college.

What happened next was a complete shock. When I returned to my office—about 20 minutes later—the phones were going mad. The *Times-Picayune* and Associated Press were "on hold" and three television new crews were on their way. The kids themselves had called a press conference. They saw the significance of my offer more than I did.

Before the day was over, I received calls from the chancellors and presidents of LSU, the University of New Orleans, Xavier University and Loyola University, offering to waive tuition to any of the children who completed the program I had laid out. The mayor of New Orleans and the chief of police also got involved with a pledge to do anything they could to help realize the opportunity that was extended.

A year has since gone by. They are eighth and ninth graders now. Early on, they started calling themselves "Taylor's Kids" and they adopted a motto: "Taylor's Kids Are Going to College." Not all of them will make it. Unfortunately, the effects of previous neglect, of the inner-city environment, of poor schooling in the lower grades and lack of motivation in early childhood will be too much for some of the children to overcome.

The important thing, however, is that these children honestly *believe* they are going to college, and they are making the most of every day in school. They are all studying hard. They are doing their homework. They have completely turned around their attitudes and behavior. For example, of the 83 ninth grade students in the program, 25 are now enrolled in freshman honors classes at their high school. The majority have brought their grades up to a "B" average. Again, these were kids who were not expected to enter high school.

What of their parents and teachers? The parents are deeply involved in the children's schoolwork because, for the first time, their children have a chance to do better in life, to break the generational cycle of poverty. About a week after I addressed the students, I was invited back to Livingston to talk to the parents. Naturally, they wanted to hear for themselves exactly what "that Mr. Taylor" had promised. Afterward, mothers and fathers came up on the stage, and nearly every one said, "If only I had known, I would have pushed them harder ... made them study ... gotten more involved." Quite a few had tears in their eyes, tears of regret and hope.

Here is another refreshing change. A school official at Livingston tells me that she spends a good portion of each day answering calls from parents making sure their kids are in school! Truancy has ceased to be a problem.

There are rewards in this for the teachers, too. They have become college-prep teachers, giving instruction to attentive, motivated, potentially college-bound students. There is a quantum improvement in classroom atmosphere.

The success of the "Taylor's Kids" program and the rationale behind the much broader educational reforms it has spawned in Louisiana are based on a principle that is fundamental to the American system of values. The principle is that the way to any goal is to set standards and to reward achievement with opportunity—real opportunity, not empty promises. If a group of seventh and eighth graders can grasp that principle so immediately and respond to it with such burning enthusiasm, the problem has to be us, not them.

As a nation, we still cling to the belief that we are a classless society. That society does not exist. In reality, we have two classes: those who can afford higher education and achieve their full potential, and those who cannot. By allowing the cost of college education to escalate beyond all reason, we have effectively denied opportunity to most of our citizens.

At the same time, we have created a complex society that demands far more education than we are willing to provide. The limit of our commitment to free public education is twelve years, through high school. Yet we know that a high school diploma is considered meaningful only as a preparation for college. Since a high school diploma has no value, the lack of it carries no penalty in the minds of youth. So they drop out of formal education entirely at the alarming rate of 28.5% nationally.

We not only assume, but we act on the assumption that some of our children cannot or will not learn. Let's be specific. When we say *some*, we actually mean low-income

and especially low-income minority children, the next generation of America's permanent underclass. I submit that these underachieving children are actually smarter than we are. Why should they work hard in the lower, middle and high school grades when there is no ultimate pay-off?

The real barriers to educational achievement are economic ones. Remove those barriers, create the expectation of college as a reward for meeting standards, and our students will perform. That is the lesson "Taylor's Kids" are trying to teach us.

In Louisiana, we are seeking to apply that lesson as broadly as possible with a two-phase proposal to achieve greater equality of opportunity in public higher education. The plan has received widespread support from ordinary citizens who pay taxes to support state colleges and universities, but who can't afford to send their kids to those same institutions. It has also been endorsed by four of the highest education policy-making bodies of our state — the Board of Regents, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Board of Trustees of Colleges and Universities, and the LSU Board of Supervisors—as well as by our state superintendent of education, legislators, business organizations, civil rights groups, and the press.

In January, 1989, our Governor, Buddy Roemer, appointed the "Commission on the Availability of College for Qualified Youth in Louisiana." The Governor selected me to chair that panel, which includes three college presidents, state education officials, lawmakers, and other concerned private citizens. I would like to describe our work in some detail, as many political leaders outside Louisiana have told me it deserves a prominent place on the national agenda.

The plan we are advocating has not been without controversy. "Radical" is the adjective most often applied. So be it. Nothing else has worked to make our education system more equitable and more productive. How far we

have come from the radical tradition of our founding citizens who built this country on a bloody revolution. Since when is equality of opportunity a radical idea?

I'm a lifelong, card-carrying Republican Party member —and I've been accused of being a "populist." This would not be such a bad thing if I ever decided to run for office in Louisiana, with its powerful legacy of sometimes "something-for-nothing" populism. But the label doesn't fit. I see myself as a true conservative. The success of our plan depends on deep-seated conservative values in our culture. We assume (and perhaps this *is* radical nowadays) that neither character, ambition, the will to work nor the ability to learn is determined by accident of birth, racial, social or economic circumstance.

Now, here is the situation as it exists in Louisiana, and in all fifty states with some variations. The cost of tuition, room and board—plus expenses for books, clothing, and spending money — for a year of full-time study at a Louisiana public university is now about $6,000. This is very close to the national average cost at public colleges and universities.

At the same time, median family income in Louisiana is approximately $26,500. Even assuming higher family incomes, college has become an excessive burden. For example, at a family income level of $30,000 annually, college education for a single youngster would absorb more than 25% of the family's total disposable income of about $24,000.

Only 10 percent of the wage earners in my state make more than $30,000 (the figure is 18% nationwide). In 1988, of Louisiana's 64 parishes, 42 had an unemployment rate over 12%, for a total of 234,000 citizens without jobs and often with school-age children to support. Some 421,805 Louisiana children under age 18 are growing up in families whose income is below the poverty line. For these poor, and increasingly for the middle-class as well, the cost of a college diploma from a state-supported university is completely out of reach. Their children have absolutely no

expectation of college and therefore no real incentive to perform well in the lower grades.

Although scholarships are available to the most gifted students who somehow make it through the system, we are frustrating the ambitions of the merely "above average" student capable of doing college work. What's worse, we are losing the vast contributions these individuals could make to our society. College availability for *all qualified students* is the key to our plan and the key to full utilization of this nation's education system.

Louisiana's first step would be to adopt college admission standards. Our state, like some others, has sought to achieve equal opportunity by maintaining a policy of open academic admissions. While well intentioned, this policy has failed miserably and is grossly unfair to our young people.

Standards are not designed as a barrier, but as a gateway and a goal for all students who can benefit from a four-year course of study towards a degree. Under open admissions, only about 20 percent of entering Louisiana freshmen receive a degree. The rest fail because they simply have not prepared themselves for college-level work. The never knew what was expected of them. To admit the unqualified is unfair to our students and wastes our educational resources.

The standards proposed for Louisiana are not excessive. Admission to public colleges would require students to complete 17.5 credit hours of an academic core curriculum (four years of English and English composition, three years each of basic science, mathematics, history and social studies, two years of foreign language, and a year of computer science), to maintain a 2.5 grade point average (C+) for four years of high school, and to score at least an 18 on the American College Test (ACT). These standards would be put in place for the 1993 college freshman class, allowing our students four years to prepare. In education, as in life, forewarned is forearmed.

The higher standards would help to remove the need for most of the remedial instruction at four-year colleges

and universities. Louisiana universities presently spend up to 30% of total classroom teaching hours providing remedial instruction to 50% of entering freshmen. This is a poor use of our public universities. Their mission is not to provide make-up instruction for all the subjects that should have been learned in high school.

The effects of tougher admissions standards have already been proven at our two flagship universities, LSU and the University of New Orleans. In 1984, these schools adopted the 17.5 credit curriculum requirement for the 1988 freshman class. Those incoming students needed 25% less remedial work than the previous year's class.

Admission standards were adopted in Tennessee five years ago, taking effect in 1989. Subsequently, there has been a substantial increase in enrollment in colleges and universities, an increase in black student enrollment, an increase in black student retention and an increase in the number of older students going to college. This is clear indication that the desire for a college education increases as the universities themselves increase the standards.

In 1970, a Carnegie Commission study of higher education in America asked perhaps the most pertinent question of our time: "How far do we have to go before ability, not financial resources, becomes the test of admission to college?" Twenty years have passed. Louisiana may finally have the answer.

The second and most important step needed in Louisiana was a *full waiver of tuition and fees by all public four-year colleges and universities for all qualified Louisiana students whose families could not otherwise afford college for their kids*. This provision has no phase-in. The waiver would be adopted immediately for all students meeting the standards described.

Matching reported family income levels with ACT scores, we estimate that there may be as many as 5,000 students who would be eligible for the waiver, or approximately 12.5 percent of the annual high school graduating class. At approximately $1600 per student for tuition, room and board, the first year cost to Louisiana

would be $6 million. That figure represents about 0.15 percent of the entire state budget and about 0.3 percent of what we are presently spending on public education.

As a businessman, I see this program not as a cost, but as an investment. Cost is operating expense. Dropping out of high school is a cost. The Louisiana Association of Business and Industry figures that every individual who drops out of school costs the state an average of $250,000 over his or her lifetime in welfare, unemployment and health care payments, and lost wages and taxes.

Cost is the cost of prison. At our state penitentiary at Angola, the figure is $25,000 per inmate per year for room, board and studies of anti-social behavior.

Cost is what the private sector spends to train workers who are not qualified for the least demanding jobs. A restaurant owner in New Orleans recently told me she had to interview over 100 applicants to fill three openings for waiters. Most could neither read well enough to comprehend the items on the menu nor do the simple arithmetic required to add up a customer's bill. Overall, the cost is staggering. American business is now spending some $25 billion a year teaching workers what they should have learned in high school.

Is it any wonder that America is losing her competitive footing in the world? Our nation is in serious decline simply because we are failing at the basic task of education, which is the transmission of the intellectual assets of society, along with its cultural and moral values, from one generation to the next. Can we honestly say we are educating our youth when 20 percent of 18-to-24-year olds cannot identify the United States of America on a world map?

At this point in the litany of what's wrong with American education, there is usually a pause for comparison between our society and our principal rivals in global economic competition, the Japanese. Most of us expect to hear how they succeed and how we fail. We will examine that. But first I wish to offer a rather *favorable* comparison of how *both* countries succeeded in the post-war era by

democratizing public higher education through specific policies and legislation. To me, this seems to be a much more productive approach.

Before her defeat in World War II and her occupation by American forces, Japan's system of higher education was modelled on the European ideal of the university. It was designed to produce an educated elite. Although great strides were also made in providing all Japanese with comprehensive practical education, the universities were essentially reserved for the upper classes of the old imperial regime.

Following the war, education reform clearly bore the stamp of the American occupation policy. A new system of mass higher education was adopted, based on the model of the American state-supported university. The system's goals were stated in the School Education Law of 1947: "A university shall have as its aim to conduct teaching and research in depth in specialized academic subjects *as well as to provide broad knowledge* and to develop intellectual, moral and practical abilities."

Conditions were right for the rapid spread of the new system. Public universities proliferated. Enrollments swelled. Admission to college rapidly became the necessary "rite of passage" for any Japanese looking to make a white-collar career in the country's emerging corporations and government ministries. As we know, the intense pressure on Japanese children to go to college has produced a much higher level of performance at all school levels. One can infer that this overall democratization of higher education has contributed significantly to the growth of Japan as one of the most successful societies in history.

There were parallel developments in the United States during the same period. If our country reached its zenith in the 1950s and early 1960s, some credit is certainly due to the tremendous infusion of college-trained individuals who earned their diplomas under Title II provisions of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the "G.I. Bill."

Administration planners expected that perhaps 500,000 servicemen would take advantage of the higher education provision of the bill. This would help to re-supply the nation with college graduates, replacing both those lost as battle casualties and those whose college careers were delayed by military service.

The estimates were completely off target. The sudden availability of college produced an incredible demand for it. In all, over 2,234,00 World War II veterans earned a college degree under the G.I. Bill. Consider, for a moment, the staggering impact of these numbers on society. The bill produced 450,000 engineers; 180,000 doctors, dentists and nurses; 150,000 scientists; 360,000 school teachers; 243,000 accountants; 107,000 lawyers; and 36,000 clergymen.

The G.I. students, by all contemporary accounts, were the most serious, most motivated college generation in history. Significantly, there is no mention in the record of anyone criticizing the program because of its cost.

Two vastly different cultures, each acting in its own self-interest, put into action policies which extended the educational opportunity to the greatest number of qualified people. The results were the same in both cases: an unprecedented period of economic growth.

Now for the promised bad news. While the Japanese learned from us (their model, after all, was our land-grant colleges created in 1862), we refuse to learn from them. Here is a nation with a much smaller population and none of the abundant natural resources we have. Yet, by the year 2000, they will overtake us in gross national product. The reason is that they continue to take full advantage of their most precious resource, their youth, while we squander ours. The Japanese continue to recruit their future leaders from all classes of society. Each individual is presumed to have the ability to learn and is carried as far as that ability merits.

Our society, in contrast, tries unsuccessfully to meet its needs from a minority of the population, those who can afford the cost of higher education. In practice we ignore the rest. This year, some 40% of the engineering school

graduates in the United States will be foreigners. Are we passing up an enormous store of brain power among our own native-born children? Unfortunately, the answer is yes.

There is a common denominator among "Taylor's Kids" and most of the vast numbers of G.I.'s and Japanese who went to college immediately after the war. They are the "first generation," the first in their families to have a college opportunity. When we look for achievers in society, when we look for the dreamers and builders, this is usually where we find them, within that first generation. My own story is not unusual. Pick up a biography of any great scientist, inventor or business leader, and chances are you will find in the opening pages a description of early hardship and exceptional desire. This is the American Dream, which is still very much alive in our culture.

Yet we are trying to build our nation exclusively with the second and third generations, children who grow up in security and affluence. We ignore the revitalizing potential in America's disadvantaged millions, and we do nothing to break the multi-generational cycle of poverty and frustration.

When we say we will turn away no child who is qualified, that every American will be able to go as far in school and in life as his or her desire, work and capacities merit, we will be telling the world that we again have an educated citizenry and work force. When every child and parent is motivated, all our schools, at all levels, will fulfill their mission.

I have offered a solution which I believe will work for Louisiana. But the denial of college opportunity exists in varying degrees in every state in our nation. Most states require more preparation on the students' part, some charge less tuition, room and board, and at least one state provides scholarships for those families below the minimum income level. But the unique feature of the Louisiana proposal is that it provides a *guarantee* of college — not scholarships, not grants, not loans, not any other compli-

cated form of financial assistance. It points the way to a necessary advance in the evolution of our democratic society, the extension of the present twelve-year promise of free public education provided by all states to sixteen years, through college.

Louisiana was the first state in the South to provide free high school education. That was in 1844. The idea was not only to benefit the individual, but to insure the vitality of the commonwealth. Our society has been totally transformed since that time. We live in a world of high technology, of change that proceeds geometrically. Yet the high school diploma is still the limit of our commitment to youth. Can't we do more?

While America's educational crisis is most clearly manifested in my home state, our system of public colleges and universities must be reformed nationwide. We can no longer afford to fund those students who are unqualified or the institutions which admit them.

The Pell Grant program was adopted in 1972 and implemented in the 1973 fiscal year. The legislation was originally entitled "The Basic Educational Opportunity Grant," and its intent was to ensure that financially underprivileged students have the opportunity to attend college. To ensure quality education in America for all qualified youth, we should consider legislation restricting Pell Grant funding only to those states whose public colleges and universities have or adopt meaningful minimum admissions standards and guarantee that no qualified applicants are denied admission because of economic considerations. We can no longer let a student's lack of financial resources be a barrier to attending college. If we do, we will continue to limit our nation's ability to compete in a rapidly changing global economy. Even worse, we will continue to deny equal opportunity to the majority of the American people.

The major features of the *Taylor Plan*, admission standards and waiver of tuition and fees at public colleges and universities for all qualified students, were passed by the

Louisiana legislature on July 1, 1989, and signed into law by Governor Roemer on July 10, 1989. Consequently, about 1,000 qualified Louisiana students are now in college who would not have been except for this new law. Louisiana has become the first state to adopt such legislation and has moved into a leadership role for the nation.

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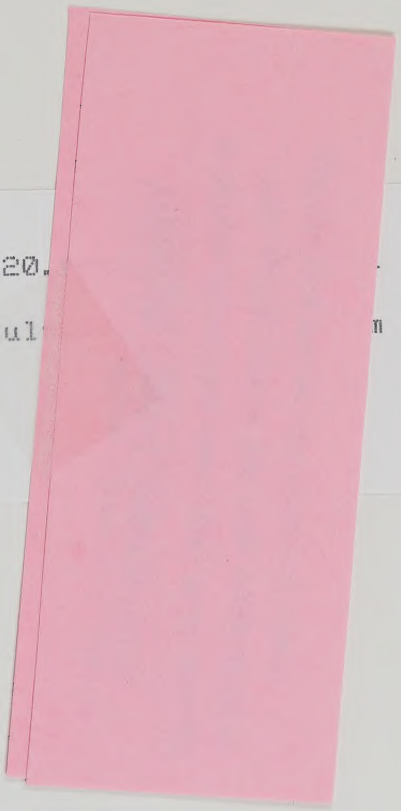

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